



Accredited
Museum

Promoting your Accreditation Award



Museums
Libraries &
Archives



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Museums
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1 Introduction

Congratulations on being awarded Accredited status. It is a great achievement and demonstrates that your museum has met nationally agreed standards on how to care for and document collections, and how to govern and manage the museum and the provision of information and services to users.

There are many ways in which Accreditation can benefit your museum and relationships with funding organisations and other external bodies. This guide has been created by MLA to help museums promote their Accredited status. It can supplement resources provided by communications colleagues, and provides easy to follow tips and templates to help:

- develop your core messaging around Accreditation
- encourage your press office, volunteers and local authority to make use of the material we have provided
- achieve media coverage for your museum, and
- provide support in promoting your museum through events, photography, branding and website content.

All of this will enable you to:

- encourage people from all sectors of the community to use, enjoy and benefit from your collections, and
 - raise the profile of your Accredited status within governing bodies and the funding community to aid the case for long-term support.
-

2. What to say

2.1 Definitions

The paragraphs below are ideal to use in your promotional materials, and to provide concise introductions to Accreditation and the MLA to your visitors and local media.

Accreditation

The MLA's Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed standards for UK museums. To meet the requirements of the scheme, museums must demonstrate that they achieve clearly defined standards relating to governance and management, services for users, visitor facilities and collections management. There are currently over 1800 museums participating in the Scheme, demonstrating their commitment to managing collections effectively for the enjoyment of all communities.

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)

Leading strategically, the MLA promotes best practice in museums, libraries and archives, to inspire innovative, integrated and sustainable services for all.

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Find out more about MLA at <http://www.mla.gov.uk>

2.2 Key messages

It is useful to have some key messages around Accreditation that you can use when promoting your museum more widely, for example when writing a press release, calling newsdesks or briefing spokespersons. Messages will vary depending on the intended audience, but examples are shown below:

To the public

- A remarkable museum is right on your doorstep. The [xxx museum] has been awarded Accredited status because it meets nationally agreed standards on collections care, how to govern museum management and the provision of information and services to visitors. Come and visit!

To governing bodies, funders, museum/library/archive community

- This Accredited [xxx] museum is a valuable learning resource for people of all ages - contributing to personal identity and social cohesion
 - Accredited museums also have an impact on the economy - for example by encouraging tourism
 - Accredited museums play a key role in caring for the UK's cultural heritage
 - The Museums, Libraries and Archive Council is committed to the continued recognition and promotion of these remarkable collections, so they can be fully enjoyed by many generations to come
-

3. How to say it

3.1 Getting started

External communication

The first step in promoting your Accredited status is to consider the many ways you can spread the word about your museum. Exploring reciprocal links with local organisations and opportunities to exchange promotional information is an incredibly useful and cost effective way to start your promotion. You could contact:

- other cultural institutions (theatres, cinemas, heritage and concert venues)
- other visitor attractions
- hotels and other holiday accommodation
- health clubs and leisure centres
- tourist information centres
- restaurants, cafes and retail outlets
- schools, colleges and universities
- public libraries

Internal communication

Remember to let people in your own organisation know about your success - your colleagues are among your most important ambassadors. Circulating articles and news about your Accredited status as widely as possible will not only make staff and volunteers feel included in your success, well informed staff are also invaluable in communicating to the wider sector. You can use a variety of means to communicate with internal audiences including:

- an internal bulletin explaining the significance of achieving Accreditation
- an article in the friends of the museum newsletter
- a letter of thanks to all staff and volunteers
- a thank you or congratulations notice in the staff room

3.2 Media coverage

Press releases

Achieving Accredited status for your museum is something to shout about and your local community, council, funding bodies, MPs and Councillors will be interested to hear about it. A great way to spread the news is to send a press release to regional media. A template press release is provided in section 4.2 which can be adapted and tailored to your museum.

Sending the press release – some things to consider:

- Method - email is best, but you can post or fax your press releases.
- Contacts - when sending out your press release; make sure you have the correct contacts for your local radio, newspapers or specialist publications. For local media it is usually best to contact the news editor or news desk.
- Branding - all press releases should include the museum logo and the Accreditation logo, plus the date and contact details (see section 3.4 for more information on branding).
- If your museum is part of a larger organisation like a local authority, their press office may send out press releases for you. To highlight why your new Accredited status is newsworthy, you could use the following bullet points:
 - it's a positive local story that showcases the council's investment in culture
 - it can help the museum to attract funders
 - the press release could include a quote from a member of the Council

When to send the press release

- Timing - Timing can be crucial to securing coverage, so call your local media to find out when is the best time to send them your press release.
 - Notice - If you are holding an awards ceremony and want journalists and photographers to attend, give them between three and five working days notice.
 - Spokesperson - A journalist will often be interested in speaking to or interviewing someone, often a Chair, Chief Executive, Director or Curator about your Accreditation status. Before you send out your press release, consider having a spokesperson available to talk to newspapers, radio or TV.
-

Speaking to the media

To help your press release stand out it's a good idea after you've sent it to your local media to follow up with a telephone call.

When calling your local media remember that they want to hear from you, but are often under tight deadlines, so be prepared. Have your press release in front of you and highlight your key points, like who, when, where and why.

If there are any questions about the Accreditation scheme, please forward these onto the MLA. If you feel anxious speaking with the media or if there are any questions which you feel uncomfortable answering, please contact the MLA press office.

Press events

An awards reception is a great way to get stakeholders together to celebrate your Accredited status and thank them for their support. Why not invite local councillors, museum supporters, local celebrities, staff and volunteers. You should also invite local press contacts and a photographer. It might also be possible for a representative of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (CyMAL), Museums Galleries Scotland or the Northern Ireland Museums Council to present your certificate at the reception (please contact the relevant organisation to discuss).

Tips for planning an event:

- Make sure that the date does not clash with any other local events. Your local authority website or local newspaper may give details on upcoming events.
- Where possible link the reception to a second cause for celebration such as an anniversary, a grant award or a recent acquisition.
- Have some of your key objects available for guests to admire.
- Make sure that key people such as the Chair, Director and Curator are on hand to give interviews/quotes to the press, and that there is a photo opportunity with all of them together.

Inviting the press to an event

The press release tells the media about what happened at the event and should be issued either on the day of the event itself by post, fax or email, or shortly after it. Give journalists between three and five working days as notice of the event. You can also issue a 'photocall' or 'press call' in advance of an event. Photocalls are for newspapers, specifically notifying of a photo opportunity. Press calls are for radio or television, specifically outlining an interview or filming opportunity. You may also want to book your own photographer, to make sure you get the images you need, see section 3.4 for details.

What to do if the media is unable to attend an event

If the media are unable to attend your event, send them a photograph from the event with an amended release which includes information on the people who attended and any relevant or memorable comments. To create a newsworthy photograph think about what key things you want the photograph to capture - the people, building or collection. Take inspiration from the photographs you see in the press and consider how you could apply them to your museum.

3.3 Contacting stakeholders and supporters

There are a number of external stakeholders you can inform about your new status as an accredited museum. These include:

- your local council (both elected members and officers)
- funding bodies
- local schools; to encourage them to work with you more closely, or organise a visit
- your local MP, and
- other key partners (other local museums, culture organisations etc) - to inform them of your status.

A template letter to stakeholders is available in section 4.2.

3.4 Photography and branding

Receiving Accreditation is a great achievement and one you should communicate to your visitors and in museum communications. To achieve this, you should use the Accreditation logo on:

- headed paper
- publicity / marketing materials
- reports and publications
- website, and
- job advertisements.



The logo is issued to all museums awarded full Accreditation. Guidelines for use are available from the Accreditation Assistant (for contact details see section 4.1).

You should display your certificate prominently to inform visitors that the museum has been awarded this national quality standard. Place it somewhere prominent such as the museum entrance or near the reception area. If your collection has also achieved Designated status please ensure that your Accreditation certificate and Designation plaque are displayed next to each other for consistency and impact.

A striking image can also have great impact when promoting your museum and Accredited status. Use images as often as you can, in promotional literature, on websites or to support news stories. The MLA may already have images from your collection in its image library (called MLA Media Zone), email the Accreditation Assistant for more details (see section 4.1). If you need to commission your own photographer for an event you can do so via the web or by contacting the local paper. Allow around £70+ an hour for a photographer, excluding expenses and VAT. If you decide to book your own photographer, you will need to write a clear brief detailing your requirements, as shown in the example below.

Parental consent is legally required when photographing children under 12 years, in line with your child protection policy or policy for working with children and young people. A parental consent form will need to be filled in by parents if you are commissioning your own photographs. Please see section 4.2 for a consent form template.

Accreditation logo style guide

Accreditation logo

The logo symbolises the prestige of the Accreditation Scheme and associated organisations, so it is important that this style guide is adhered to when using the logo.

The logo should always be produced in Pantone 5125 (see colour reference box) or black. The size of the logo depends on where it is being used but should never be below 25mm diameter.



Colour reference

Pantone 5125

C65 M86 Y49 K0

R120 G73 B106

HTML 816578

Logo positioning

Wherever possible the logo will be placed along the top left margin, but can be aligned with a headline or other text on a brochure cover for example. On partner communications it will sometimes be necessary for the Accreditation logo to appear at the bottom of the page with other logos. In these cases it is preferable that the logo is to the left of the page and set to the same scale as other logos. This also applies when using the Accreditation and MLA logos together (see example on the below).

The logo font is Futura, and for consistency we would suggest using this or a complimentary font such as Arial alongside the logo, however you may also have your own style guide to adhere to and your own brand font.

Logo positioning – with MLA logo



Where to use the logo

As an Accredited museum we would encourage that you promote your accolade by including the Accreditation logo on all of your organisation's advocacy or marketing.

This could include posters, publications, leaflets, websites, articles, adverts, and introductory text panels.

Template photography brief

Photographer name:

Address:

Location:

Time: xx:xxam/pm

Meeting: Please ask for [contact name] on arrival.

Details

We would like colour photography taken for press purposes depicting our reception and would ask that you attend before 10.45am to discuss any last minute lighting/position arrangements. We anticipate the photocall lasting x hours. Our budget is £xx.

Include any relevant information on style/format etc.

Please ensure the supplied consent form is completed by any members of the public who are photographed. This is particularly important if children are involved.

[Insert your contact details]

3.5 Websites

You can promote your Accredited status very effectively using your museum's website. People tend to 'scan read' website content, as such the following tips can prove very useful when writing effective web copy:

- Use the 'reverse pyramid' or 'front-loading' technique of writing whereby you put the most important information first. For example, make sure you mention in the opening paragraph that your collection has achieved Accredited status
- Write in short, concise sentences (of 16-20 words), using plain English
- Keep your text succinct so that readers don't have to scroll down
- Use each paragraph to convey a single point
- Use bullet points but not too many - studies show that the optimum number of points that people absorb are five, seven or nine

4 Useful information and resources

4.1 Contacts

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
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Birmingham
B2 5RS

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T: 0121 345 7365



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4.2 Appendices templates

Appendix 1: Press release template

The following template press release can be tailored to your museum and issued to local and regional press.

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: [INSERT DATE]

Contact: [INSERT NAME, TITLE, TEL, EMAIL]

[INSERT MUSEUM'S WEBSITE ADDRESS (IF AVAILABLE)]

[Insert name of museum] museum gains national quality standard
[Insert name of museum] Museum in [name of town] has just been officially 'Accredited'
by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

[Insert paragraph here about the museum and any other information of note.
For example: The museum, which holds a fine archaeology collection,
has recent completed new displays of the collection.]

The MLA's Museum Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed standards for all
museums in the UK. [Insert name of museum] Museum's award proves that it measures
up, meeting the guidelines on how it is run, how it looks after its collections and the
services it provides its visitors.

[Name and job title eg Chair, Director, curator, etc] commented:

"[Insert quote. For example: how pleased / thanks to staff taking part /
what this means for museum]."

Andrew Motion, Chair of MLA, said: "Being awarded Accreditation is an impressive
achievement. It recognises the high standard and service that [insert name of museum]
provides and acknowledges the hard work of its volunteers and staff."

End

Notes to editors:

[Insert any other relevant information about the museum here].

1. The MLA is the government's agency for museums, libraries and archives.
Leading strategically, we promote best practice to inspire innovative,
integrated and sustainable services for all.
Visit <http://www.mla.gov.uk>
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Appendix 2: Photography consent form template

PHOTOGRAPHIC CONSENT FORM

From time to time the XXX [insert institution] takes photographs for use to promote its collections. For children below 12 years of age to appear in these photos, full parental/guardian consent is required. For young people between the ages of 12-16 parental/guardian consent is recommended but not essential. The young person may, having read the form, sign for themselves. All persons over 16 can sign for themselves.

The XXX [insert institution] never publishes personal details without additional permission being given.

This consent form covers any use of the images (and supporting textual information) by the XXX [insert institution] for a five year period starting from the date you sign this form. At the end of that period all images will cease to be used and will be destroyed.

You may wish to keep a copy of this form

Legal clauses – these apply to the whole of the form

Signing this form gives agreement for the individual named to take part in a photographic/video shoot for the XXX [insert institution] thereby giving consent to the full use of the material by that organisation. Additionally if you have given permission, personal details may be used in conjunction with your image.

I agree to notify the XXX [insert institution] before speaking to the press/broadcast media concerning this photographic/video shoot. The copyright of any material which is generated as a result of this shall be assigned to the XXX [insert institution]. This agreement is covered by the law of England and Wales.

Signed:

Name:

Address:

See over for parent/guardian consent for children.

Image consent (tick as appropriate)

- I am the parent/guardian of this child aged 0–12
- I am the young person (aged 12–16)
- I am the parent/guardian of the young person (aged 12–16)
(additional recommended approval)
- I am the individual and am 16+ years

Personal details consent (tick as appropriate)

- As the parent/guardian I give my permission for the child's (aged 0–12) or young person's (aged 12–16) name/pseudonym (delete as necessary) to be used with their image in conjunction with text.
- I am the young person (aged 12–16) and I give permission for my name/pseudonym (delete as necessary) to be used with my image in conjunction with text. NB even if the parent/guardian has given permission the young person aged 12–16 must also agree.
- I am the individual and I give permission for my name/pseudonym to be used with my image in conjunction with text

Personal details

Name of child/young person/individual:

Name of parent/guardian
(where applicable)*:

Address
(parent/guardian or individual):

Postcode:

Signed
(parent/guardian/individual)*:

Signed
(young person aged 12–16):

*Always for a child 0–12 years.
Recommended but not essential for young
people aged 12–16. Not required for
individuals 16+

Personal details

Name of child/young person/individual:

School/organisation details
Name of school/organisation:

Address of school/organisation
(where applicable):

Postcode:

Date:



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Appendix 3:

Letter to external stakeholders and supporters

The following letter should be on headed paper (with the Accreditation logo) and include a phone number with email address and the museum's website address if available. The letter can be amended according to who it is addressed to and the key messages you need to communicate.

LETTER TO EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND SUPPORTERS

Date
Address

Dear XXX

[Insert name of museum]'s new Accredited status

[Insert name of museum] has just been awarded Accredited status from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). This award demonstrates that the museum has achieved clearly defined national standards relating to governance and management, user services, visitor facilities and collections management.

We are very proud to have been awarded this status and would like to [insert message appropriate to the addressee. For example, invite you to the museum to see for yourself the visitor experience, outstanding collections and dedicated staff. Or, take this opportunity to inform you about the education and learning services the museum can offer you and the pupils in your school.]

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.
Yours sincerely,

[Insert name]
[Insert job title]



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This publication is available in large print, please contact the Editorial Team on 0121 345 7365 for details



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