

The PRISM grant fund: Guidance for applicants

Notes to assist potential applicants in determining whether they are eligible for a grant from the PRISM Fund, and to guide them through the application process

July 2010



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What is the PRISM Fund?

The Fund was established in 1973 to further the preservation of items or collections which are important in the history and development of science, technology, industry, and fields therein. The Fund awards grants towards the costs of acquisition and conservation of such items.

The PRISM Fund is a rolling grant programme with no deadlines. Applications can be submitted at any time of the year and we aim to give a decision within two months of receiving an application. Decisions are made by the Fund Manager using established criteria together with the advice of expert assessors (normally from national institutions). An annual report is published on the MLA website www.mla.gov.uk.

PRISM grant aid is offered through a funding agreement which outlines the details of all terms and conditions. The general terms and conditions are available on request.

Who Can Apply?

Museums and related institutions in England and Wales are eligible. Corresponding schemes are administered in Scotland and Northern Ireland by the National Museums of Scotland and the Northern Ireland Museums Council.

All Registered/Accredited museums are eligible except Nationals funded directly through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Applications are also accepted from other charitable or public bodies engaged in the preservation of eligible material. This includes specialist libraries, public repositories, and archives/libraries formally linked to local authorities or eligible bodies such as universities and religious organisations. Where none of these applies, other bodies may apply provided they can demonstrate that they are Charitable Trusts which are:

- established for educational and heritage purposes;
- appropriately organised to hold and/or develop collections of artefacts (in some cases a single artefact);
- able to provide regular access to the item to be funded;
- viable in the medium to long term. The group should have a large membership base and be able to demonstrate that its membership is not static and that new members are replacing those that leave.

Private individuals, society-run or company-run museums without charitable status are not eligible. Grant-aided material must be held in the public domain, and there must be a long term intention to retain and care for it.

How much can PRISM award?

The maximum acquisition or conservation grant is 50% of eligible project costs. Applicants must be able to demonstrate sources of match-funding at the time of application.

If the fund considers costs to be excessive, or if demand on the fund is high, the grant may be lower. If you can reclaim VAT, this will be excluded from the grant calculation.

All grants are between £500 and £20,000 for any one application. An institution can receive up to £20,000 per year from PRISM (museum services are considered as single institutions for this purpose). Any one object may receive a maximum of £20,000 in its lifetime.

Identifying appropriate matching funding is the responsibility of the grant applicant.

In the case of conservation grants, the notional value of volunteer labour on eligible works is allowable as matching funding at a nominal rate of £50 per volunteer per day.

PRISM grants can be offered to support projects that are receiving other central government grants such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Eligible and ineligible costs

The following costs are eligible:

- Purchase price, including auction premiums.
- Transport including dismantling and re-erection (this includes objects which have been donated).
- Re-assembly of items commonly dismantled for transport or where specialist skill and equipment are required (e.g. aircraft, power generation units).
- VAT if this is not reclaimable by the applicant institution.
- Plant hire (crane etc).
- Fees for contracted out elements of eligible work (conservation etc).
- Salaries for temporary appointments to projects.
- Commission paid to agents for facilitating purchase at auction.
- Purchase of consumables/materials used in eligible work.
- Works to large scale/structural machinery (e.g. settling tanks etc.).
- Art items where the subject matter is scientific/industrial and is the primary reason for purchase/conservation.
- Limited cataloguing as a by-product of a conservation project.
- Re-housing collections in conservation quality enclosures, such as sleeving of vulnerable archival/photographic collections, and acid free boxes for natural history specimens (materials/labour),
- Construction of bespoke cradles/supports in exceptional circumstances.

The Fund will consider:

- Supporting the restoration of objects (excluding aeroplanes) to working order where this is deemed appropriate.
- Supporting the acquisition or conservation of buildings that are significant in the history of science and industry on a case-by-case basis.
- Supporting the acquisition or conservation of models and replicas which are of scientific/industrial interest in their own right, on a case-by-case basis.

The following costs are not eligible:

- Anything incurred before the application has been approved.
- Removal not associated with acquisition or conservation (e.g. between sites).
- Provision of new motive power sources to exhibits (e.g. electric drives or modern steam plant).
- Maintenance, repairs, running costs or renovation/replacement of worn parts arising from operation, e.g. repairs to boilers, re-tubing etc. It is expected that the organisation will budget for these operating costs.
- Cataloguing projects.
- VAT if this is reclaimable by the applicant organisation.
- Acquisition or conservation of buildings for development or storage purposes.
- Infrastructure improvements (improvements to or furnishings for stores/galleries).
- Storage projects (except where there is a direct conservation / collection care benefit).
- Fees for professional services (surveys, valuations etc.).
- Purchase of capital equipment including IT equipment, tools and plant.
- Exhibition and display materials.
- Digitisation projects.
- Lighting, environmental control and monitoring equipment and storage furniture.
- Permanent staff salary and expenses.
- Works or equipment required to meet Health & Safety regulations.
- Art items where the primary reason for purchase/ conservation is aesthetic.
- Conservation to objects which are not owned by the applicant institution.

How do I apply?

An example of the application form is available to view at <http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/support/grants/PRISM>

To receive a blank copy of the form, please send a request to the PRISM Fund at prism@mla.gov.uk or telephone 0121 345 7308

The application form will need to include a supporting statement establishing the significance of the material in a local, regional or national context.

You should also outline:

- why your institution is a suitable home for the object
- how you intend to provide public access

Priority will be given to objects of national significance.

In the case of conservation grants you will also need to provide a conservation plan and copies of estimates/quotes obtained.

You will need to submit two copies of the documentation (i.e. application form, statement, estimates) and two sets of pictures. The application must be signed by the Senior Officer/Chairman or equivalent. (If you are submitting your application by e-mail you will not need to submit paper copies of supplementary evidence in addition to the electronic copy.)

Applications for acquisitions must be submitted before the object is acquired. Applications for conservation grants must be submitted before any conservation work is commenced.

Costs incurred prior to the submission of the application will not be considered for grant-in-aid.

Applications are assessed by expert referees who examine the strength of the case made in the application, the viability of the work and the level of costs. If the cost of acquiring or caring for an object is high, referees may also take into account the extent to which the application duplicates work by other organisations. Inspections of the material by referees or PRISM Fund staff may also be necessary.

How do I claim the Grant?

Once your application has been approved you will be sent a Memorandum of Agreement. You will need to sign it and return one copy to the Grants and Procurement Manager to secure an agreement. Please bear in mind that acquisition grants are usually held open for a maximum of 6 months from the date of the Agreement. Conservation grants will normally be held open for a maximum of 12 months from the date of Agreement. Requests for stage payments will be considered at the discretion of PRISM Fund Grant Administration. Grants unclaimed after these periods may be withdrawn without notice.

PRISM grants are paid retrospectively. Once your project is complete, you will need to fill in the Declaration Form, a copy of which will have been posted to you with the Memorandum of Agreement. Along with the Declaration Form, you will need to present a Statement of Expenditure, signed by the Director or equivalent of the organisation. You may be asked to present original documentation for checking only, which will be returned to you.

PRISM retains the right to re-claim grants if:

- The Grant-aided item is not maintained to the relevant Care of Collections Standards.
- The Grant-aided item is not housed on a permanent basis in secure, environmentally suitable conditions.
- Access to the Grant-aided item is not made available to the public, including those with disabilities.
- You dispose of, sell, mortgage, charge against or otherwise surrender rights to grant-aided material without receiving written permission from the Fund.
- Your organisation ceases to fulfil PRISM Fund eligibility criteria.

Long-term loans and transfer of ownership of Grant-aided material to other institutions require written approval from the PRISM Fund Manager. Transfers will normally be approved if the proposed new exhibitor/owner can demonstrate that it meets our eligibility criteria.

Promoting the PRISM fund

We recommend that following PRISM funding you endeavour to use the logo and supporting statement where appropriate on associated materials.

Logo

When promoting items benefiting from the fund you can use the MLA logo. Full guidelines on using the MLA logo are available on the MLA website.

http://www.mla.gov.uk/about/brand_and_house_style



Ideally our guidelines state the logo is used top or bottom left wherever possible, at a minimum size of 25 mm (we recommend a minimum of 40mm for A4 use) and only in the brand colours shown.

Please also take note of the 'exclusion zone', that is, an area which should always be kept clear around the logo. This area is defined by the diameter of the circles within the logo itself. This is the absolute minimum space to be left clear around the logo. This means imagery or type should not come any closer to the logo than this 'exclusion' zone.

For quality results, ensure you use the correct file for the particular project in hand.

Supporting statement

The logo should also be accompanied by a line of text referencing the fund: 'Supported by the MLA PRISM Fund'.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like to discuss the application process, or the eligibility of your organisation, please contact:

Paula Brikci, Designation and Fund Manager

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

Grosvenor House

14 Bennett's Hill

Birmingham B2 5RS

T: 0121 345 7342

E: prism@mla.gov.uk

For logo or brand queries please contact:

Laura Smith, Senior Editorial and Brand Manager

E: laura.smith@mla.gov.uk



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