

Review of Research England Museums, Galleries and Collections Fund 2023

Guidance for submissions

1. This document contains guidance for higher education providers (HEPs) who wish to make a submission to the review of Research England funding for museums, galleries and collections, which we abbreviate to HEMG¹ throughout this document.

Background

2. Research England currently provides funding to support HEMGs in the higher education (HE) sector. Our funding is primarily intended to allow HEMGs to provide a service to the wider research community where there is significant cost beyond what is required to meet the needs of their own researchers and students. These HEMGs must provide a unique and significant contribution to research and scholarship to justify additional support.

3. We currently provide over £11 million to 33 HEMGs across 19 Higher Education Providers (HEPs) that have research significance beyond their home institution². The funding for individual HEMGs was agreed by the Board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (the precursor to Research England) in 2016 on the basis of a formal review, chaired by Dame Diane Lees.

Aims of the review

4. The aim of this review is to ensure that judgements on HEMG funding continue to be based on clear principles and evidence, making the allocation of this funding as transparent as possible.

5. The review will provide assurance and justification for the operation of HEMG funding, establishing that the fund continues to be fit-for-purpose, value for money and delivering concrete results. The review will set priorities and future funding levels from 2024-25 for five years, subject to available funding³.

6. The review criteria will be considered in the context of a fixed funding environment; in other words the total amount of HEMG funding available is unlikely to be increased from current levels even if more HEMG are funded.

7. Funding is intended to contribute to the additional costs borne by the HEP to support HEMGs which provide a significant resource across the HE sector, in line with Research England's policy aims. Research England would not expect to provide this funding for activities which are already recognised and supported through our formula-based grant allocations to HEPs or through other existing targeted

¹ The HEMG fund is intended primarily to support university museums and galleries, but is available for significant and unique collections and archives held within universities that are outside of a traditional museum or gallery structure.

² For a list of those funded in academic year 2022-23 please see: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/higher-education-museums-and-galleries-funding/>

³ Future funding is not yet confirmed. Research funding allocations are currently confirmed on an annual basis by UKRI, guided by priorities determined by DSIT and the outcomes of the government spending review.

allocations (for example, the funding awarded should not duplicate Research England funding for national research libraries).

8. The review panel will consider submissions within the context of the individual HEMG and HEP, taking into account the scale and potential scope of the HEP where applicable. The submission from each HEMG should provide evidence in relation to past performance, potential for future performance, and plans to deliver outcomes.

Criteria for the review and guidance on submissions

9. The criteria for the review are provided below. Additional guidance on submissions is provided in the text boxes beneath each section.

10. The following terms are used consistently within the review guidance and will be applied by the review panel as follows:

- a. **'Unique'** will be applied in relatively flexible terms; the spirit of the guidance is not intended to demand absolute international exclusivity of the HEMG.
- b. **'Research'** is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, culture, society, and to the public and voluntary sectors; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction.
- c. **'Scholarship'** is used to encompass wide-ranging academic activity, relating to the creation, development and maintenance of an intellectual infrastructure and engagement in continuing research activity. It includes, but is not limited to, the generation of new knowledge, the synthesis, analysis, and critical appraisal of the research or creative works of others, the application of knowledge to consequential problems, the development, implementation, and teaching and learning techniques and strategies
- d. **'Wider community'** is intended to include, but should not be limited to, undergraduate and postgraduate students, visiting researchers, engagement with the wider public, including schools and local communities, other HEPs and the broader museums and galleries sector.

11. Research England endorses the broad role that university HEMGs play in the wider HE landscape and beyond, particularly in widening participation. However, the review will consider which university HEMGs should be funded on the basis of the particular functions outlined in the requirements described here.

Submissions should directly address the criteria set out in the review and only draw on the wider functions and achievements of the HEMG where they are relevant to the criteria below.

Gateway criteria

12. The following gateway criteria will apply and, if not satisfied, will prevent the applicant from being considered for funding. The museum, gallery and/or collection on which the submission is based must:

- a. be a 'university museum or gallery' and have a substantial and long-term financial commitment to maintaining a collection

In judging whether this is the case we will consider a number of criteria, including:

- the collection is actually owned by the HEP
- the collection is housed in the HEP's own premises (and/or on HEP-owned land) at the cost of the HEP
- the HEP is substantially involved in the governance and/or management of the museum, including ownership of the business that operates the museum
- the HEP has taken on a substantial and long-term financial commitment to maintaining the museum and its collections
- the accounts of the museum are embedded in the HEP's own accounts or a contractual obligation to fund the museum on a long-term basis
- museum staff, dedicated to providing a service to HE, are paid by the HEP.

We do not envisage requiring applications to meet all of these criteria to qualify, though equally meeting any one criterion would not be sufficient. A HEP's response in relation to all of the criteria taken together should provide sufficient information to make a clear and robust decision.

- b. incur significant reach beyond the HEP's own researchers and students and as far as possible demonstrate the additional costs associated with this

To satisfy the gateway criteria, a 200-word summary drawing on the evidence below is required. This should clearly link to quality criteria 'a'.

- Evidence of the gain to the HE sector at large from its activities, and that the costs to the host institution associated with that gain are sufficiently significant to warrant additional funding
- a best estimate of the costs incurred due to providing a service to the wider HE community outside of the host institution.

- c. make, or have the potential to make, a unique and significant contribution to research and scholarship in the HE sector

To satisfy the gateway criteria, a 200-word summary drawing on the evidence below is required. This should clearly link to quality criteria 'b'.

- evidence of a 'unique and significant contribution' may be provided through existing public documents and research outputs
- submissions are invited to provide extracts or summarise their existing forward plans, including the statement of purpose, key aims and specific objectives and review of previous forward plans, as they relate to this criteria. The 'forward plan'⁴ may be based on a university strategy or similar, or an action plan drawn from the relevant school or departmental plan.

⁴ The existing 'forward plan' document may be provided as an Annex to the submission.

- d. be operated in an efficient manner and demonstrate financial sustainability

Submissions should provide evidence of financial sustainability, with evidence of solvency and sufficient funds to operate. Where appropriate, this might include management accounts, relevant to their constitutional arrangements, or equivalent final income and headline expenditure for the last one to three years.

- e. Hold Arts Council Accreditation status, 'Working Towards Accreditation' status or provide reasons for ineligibility

Those eligible should hold Arts Council Museum Accreditation or be registered with the Arts Council as 'Working Towards Accreditation'. For collections ineligible for this status this should be clarified and the spirit of the accreditation should be evidenced in terms of equivalent good practice and standards.

Only under exceptional circumstances will the panel consider cases from those eligible for Arts Council Museum Accreditation but not currently accredited nor formally working towards this status.

Quality and funding criteria

13. The review will consider to what extent the HEMG meets core RE policy aims and promotes excellence in research and scholarship that warrants additional RE research funding. The review will consider submissions in the context of the individual HEMG and HEP, drawing on evidence of past performance, potential for future performance and plans to deliver outcomes in relation to the following quality criteria:

- a. how far the HEMG is providing a service to the wider research community at significant cost beyond that required to meet the needs of its own researchers and students (beyond the normal degree of reciprocity in sharing research resources), highlighting the value added by the collection

Submissions are expected to clearly link to, and expand on, the summary provided for gateway criteria 'b'. Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- details of the service provided to the wider research community, with evidence of the gain to the HE sector at large from these activities
- a best estimate of the costs incurred due to providing a service to the wider HE community outside of the host institution, with information to identify the total expenditure currently required to support the HEMG
- evidence of stewardship and management costs only where contribution is significant to providing a service to both the host institution and the wider sector
- information that the costs to the host institution associated with the broader gains to the HE sector are sufficiently significant to warrant additional funding.

- b. evidence that use of the HEMG has led to unique and significant contributions to research, scholarship and research impact in the UK and/or internationally

Submissions are expected to clearly link to, and expand on, the summary provided for gateway criteria 'c'. Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- existing public documents and references to internationally excellent outputs of research and scholarship including, but not limited to, journal articles, monographs and practice-based research
- extract(s) from existing forward plans, as far as they relate to this criteria and as provided at gateway criteria b. This may include the statement of purpose, key aims and specific objectives, and review of previous forward plans
- REF impact case studies that detail the activity or HEMG on which the submission is based
- Arts Council Designation status, in recognition that the HEMG is, or has the potential to be, an essential research collection for its subject. Where the HEMG does not have Arts Council Designation, the spirit of this status should be drawn on including:
 - how the collection is central to advancing public understanding and scholarly knowledge of the subject that it represents
 - whether the collection has benefitted from being the subject of research
 - the reputation of the collection as an established resource for research and scholarship.

- c. the extent to which the HEMG offers innovative, unique and significant value to undergraduate and postgraduate students

Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- existing policies and forward plans relating to the value offered to undergraduate and postgraduate students both internal and external to the HEP
- development of research skills and training for aspiring academics, including early career researchers and postgraduate students

- d. the extent to which the HEMG provides additional external benefit both digitally and in person, including engaging the public, schools and wider community with research

University HEMGs should be recognised as exemplars of good practice across the wider museums and galleries sector, able to test innovative practices and push boundaries. Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- information about the wider engagement activities undertaken and, as far as possible, the outcomes and impact of these activities
- visitor numbers and relationships with relevant stakeholder groups
- use of digital technologies and/or crowdsourcing to enhance access to the resources available to the wider community

- innovative and influential partnerships and collaborations
- the integration and link between academic study and material culture.

e. Appropriate plans in place and/or actions taken to support and promote accessibility and use of collections both in person and digitally

Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- information about existing or planned digitisation of collections
- evidence of, or plans to, improve accessibility, discoverability and/or searchability of collections to support research
- work to support and promote open research

f. appropriate plans in place and actions taken to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across the HEMG

Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion across:
 - HEMG staff
 - researchers
 - students
 - volunteers
 - visitors
 - collections
- evidence of, or plans to, engage underserved audiences

g. appropriate plans in place and actions taken to promote sustainable access to collections

Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- consideration of:
 - economic sustainability
 - environmental sustainability – including plans and progress towards Net Zero
 - social sustainability
 - sustainable use of collections
 - digital preservation – preserving access to any digital resources

h. whether Research England HEMG funding is an appropriate proportion of the total cost of sustaining the museum or gallery, demonstrating additionality, and not core funding

Submissions should draw on the information provided at gateway criteria 'b' and 'c' and quality criteria 'a', to address this requirement.

- Submissions may also include further information about existing core funding streams as well as evidence of the leverage capabilities of existing funding for further private or other funding sources
- submissions should explain the level of HEMG funding that is sought.

To avoid disadvantage to HEMGs that are not currently in receipt of this funding, submissions may draw on potential for future performance and plans to deliver outcomes. Where submissions are only able to evidence potential, they should explain why it has not happened to date, what the current plans are to realise it, and how Research England HEMG funding might help.

Contextual data

Comparable headline contextual data will be required for all submissions. This will include AY 2021/22 data on:

- number of higher education visits
- number of further education visits
- number of HEP courses drawing on the collection
- number of loans made (including number of items and whether national or international)
- percentage of collection documented
- number of website visits
- number of exhibitions
- number of pupils on school visits
- number of public events
- number of visitors

The review process

14. The review panel will be led by Dr Nick Merriman, Chief Executive and Director of Content for the Horniman Museum and Gardens. The other members will be Dr Valerie Johnson, Emeritus Professor Dinah Birch, Dr Catherine Eagleton, Professor Jane Henderson, Dr Alice Stevenson and Professor Anthony Musson (see Annex A for further information).

15. Having established whether a submission satisfies the gateway criteria, the review panel will consider the written submission, with regard to the criteria for the review, and advise whether it is appropriate to provide funding to each HEMG and the level of funding allocated to successful HEMG. The panel's recommendations will be considered by the Research England Executive Chair who will make final decisions on allocations of grants.

Making a submission to the review

16. HEPs are invited to provide a separate written submission for each of the HEMGs for which they wish to receive funding, both those currently in receipt of funding, and for any other collection which they now wish to be considered for funding. Each HEMG submission must be accompanied by a brief covering letter providing authorisation by the head of institution. If a HEP is requesting funding for more than one HEMG one letter can be provided referencing all submissions or each HEMG submission can be accompanied by an individual letter.

17. Submissions should explain why the institution believes that the HEMG qualifies for Research England HEMG funding and at what level, with regard to the terms of reference, and should cite clear evidence for the nature and extent to which they satisfy the above criteria. All claims made should be substantiated with evidence. The review team may seek additional evidence to verify, validate or expand on the information provided.

18. A written submission should be provided to address both the gateway criteria and quality criteria, as per the guidance provided above. A submission template is provided in order to support the panel review of submissions. Evidence to support the gateway criteria is confined to two A4 pages for any one HEMG (see section 1 of the submission template), and evidence to support quality criteria is confined to nine A4 pages (see section 2 of the submission template). **Throughout the submission we will be strongly influenced by concise and persuasive arguments, rather than extensive background information.**

19. Existing documents referred to in submissions, such as the forward plan or an annual report, may be provided as annexes but will not form part of the formal assessment and will only be reviewed at the panel's discretion. Only documents and policies that already exist should be provided.

20. Alongside the written submission, contextual data regarding the size and utilisation of the collection will be collected in a standard format (see section 3 of the submission template).

21. The written submission should be sent to researchpolicy@re.ukri.org by **noon on Thursday 14 September 2023**. All submissions must be accompanied by a brief covering letter providing authorisation by the head of institution.

Outcomes

22. The review will identify those HEMGs that satisfy the review criteria, and will provide broad recommendations on future funding levels. The review panel will also provide advice to Research England on suitable monitoring arrangements for successful HEMGs.

23. The Research England Executive Chair will determine the precise method and level of funding to be allocated to the institutions identified in this review, having regard to the advice from the review panel and overall funding priorities. This will inform allocations from academic year 2024-25 onwards.

24. We expect this funding to remain fixed for a five-year period, dependent on funding allocations confirmed annually by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). The approach to HEMG funding will continue to be considered in the context of overall government funding and policy priorities and any proposed government changes to the HE and research landscape. After this five-year period HEMG funding would be subject to further review. Research England may review funding for an individual HEMG before the end of this five-year period if, for instance, an HEMG closes during this period or its function changes significantly. HEMGs who receive this funding will be required to inform Research England of any significant changes that would affect adherence to the gateway criteria during the funding period.

25. Some HEMGs may see their funding reduced or removed as a result of this review. If this happens we will work with the HEP to ensure that any consequent instability is kept to a manageable level. We may consider, where resources are available, phasing in any reductions to allow HEPs to adapt to their new circumstances.

Annex A: Chair and panel membership

Panel Chair: Dr Nick Merriman – Chief Executive and Content Director, Horniman Museum and Gardens

Panel members:

Professor Dinah Birch – Emeritus Professor, University of Liverpool

Dr Valerie Johnson – Director of Research and Collections, The National Archives

Dr Catherine Eagleton – Director of Libraries and Museums, University of St Andrews

Professor Jane Henderson – Professor of Conservation, Cardiff University

Dr Alice Stevenson – Associate Professor of Museum Studies, University College London

Professor Anthony Musson – Head of Research, Historic Royal Palaces