

## **Call for Evidence: A Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education (SFC/CE/01/2020)**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit a response to the Call for Evidence for the SFC review. As the key representative bodies for the museum sector in Scotland, we are making this response in support of university museums.

The collections of University Museums in Scotland (UMIS)<sup>i</sup> members, representing the nine Accredited<sup>ii</sup> university museums services across Scotland, collectively constitute a fundamental national cultural resource:

- Distributed national collections of over 1.8 million items
- Holdings that comprise 32% of the country's materials on history of science, 31% of the nation's coins and medals, 24% of its fine art, 20% of natural science collections and 18% of its world culture collections
- Collections in five universities, including the entire holdings of the Universities of Aberdeen and Glasgow, have been Recognised as Nationally Significant under the Scottish Government's Recognition Scheme<sup>iii</sup>

We are well aware that there will be a scarcity of public resources during and following the Covid-19 epidemic and that the full implications are yet to manifest. We have concerns that, in making essential considerations around re-distribution and re-deployment of budgets, higher education establishments and funding bodies may overlook the valuable contribution university museums make to their host institutions, local communities and to Scotland as a whole.

The Scottish Government considers culture a national priority, and heritage within an institutional setting is an intrinsic part of the cultural make up of Scotland. Scotland's Cultural Strategy<sup>iv</sup> states not only that 'Celebrating culture is part of every community, essential to our lives and wellbeing', but also that Scotland should '...place culture as a central consideration across all policy areas...'

The support that university museums receive from the Scottish Funding Council and their host universities is crucial in enabling these organisations to make broader contributions within and outwith tertiary education. In addition, it should be remembered that in working together towards shared outcomes, the UMIS members are fundamental to both the rich cultural ecosystem of Scotland, and to our country's higher education infrastructure.

Academically, the museums' collections enrich the teaching experience that universities offer and contribute across Scotland's Higher and Further education institutions. In addition, university museums are recognised as knowledge hubs and highly important research assets, collectively valued by the research community globally. In 2018/19, members of UMIS:

- Provided 2,500 hours of teaching and teaching support to almost 9,500 students
- Received over 4,500 research enquiries to their services.

But beyond their institutions, university museums will play a crucial role in helping society and our local communities recover from the coronavirus. Public engagement is a substantial part of every cultural institutions' operations with outreach activities, school visits and public events part of their annual calendar. Last year alone, UMIS members recorded 30,000 participants in their public programming, which provided not only for existing and engaged audiences but involved activities with SHEP schools and other under-represented groups. Despite having been closed during lockdown, the museums have remained active and engaged audiences online – providing activities, talks, lectures, virtual tours, schools programming and health and wellbeing activities.

Many university museums are already facing significant in-year and longer-term budget cuts and have lost staff due to recruitment freezes and non-renewal of contracts. The ongoing contribution of host university and SFC funding will be essential to the continuation of these services and to their future programming.

We hope that this submission is helpful and that it highlights our collective concerns around the future of the infrastructure of university museums in Scotland. If you would like to discuss the content of this submission further, please contact Sarah Burry-Hayes, Co-ordinator for UMIS on the contact details given.

Kind regards

Museums Association<sup>v</sup>  
Industrial Museums Scotland<sup>vi</sup>  
Glasgow Life - Museums<sup>vii</sup>  
Scottish Museums Federation<sup>viii</sup>  
Association of Independent Museums<sup>ix</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> University Museums in Scotland (UMIS) is a network of the nine Scottish university museum services that have achieved Accreditation – the UK industry standard for museums and galleries.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/accreditation-scheme/about-accreditation#section-1>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/accreditation-recognition/recognition-scheme/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/culture-strategy-scotland/>

<sup>v</sup> The Museums Association is a UK-wide professional membership organisation, representing more than 10,000 individual members, 1,500 museums and 250 corporate members. [www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)

<sup>vi</sup> Industrial Museums Scotland is a group of Accredited museums holding Recognised industrial collections. [www.goindustrial.co.uk](http://www.goindustrial.co.uk)

<sup>vii</sup> Glasgow Life is a charity that delivers cultural, sporting and learning activities on behalf of Glasgow City Council. They run the largest civic museums service in the UK. [www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums](http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums)

<sup>viii</sup> The Scottish Museums Federation is a membership body for individuals working in the Scottish museums sector. [www.scottishmuseumsfederation.org.uk](http://www.scottishmuseumsfederation.org.uk)

<sup>ix</sup> The Association of Independent Museums is a national charity which connects, supports and represents museums, art galleries and heritage sites, providing a network and grants for museums. [www.aim-museums.co.uk](http://www.aim-museums.co.uk)