



University Museums, Galleries and Collections grant

- This paper updates the Board on the recent review of the University Museums, Galleries and Collections (MGC) grant, and seeks approval for the continuation of the grant for a further year to end January 2023 at an investment level of no more than £1.2M.

Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- Note a summary of the achievements of the University Museums and Galleries over the current funding period and note the guidance our review of the grant has given for the future.
- Agree to extend funding for the University Museums and Collections at the present level of £1.2M for a further year to end January 2023, recognising that predicting future affordability is challenging at this point in time.
- Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the details of the funding agreement with the universities hosting these collections for the period concerned.

Financial implications

- £1.2M across Financial Years 2021-22 and 2022-23, to be drawn from HE Non-Core Funds.
- As the recommendation here is for funding of more than £1M, permission from Scottish Ministers to consider such an allocation has been sought.

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Purpose

1. This paper updates the Board on the recent review of the University Museums, Galleries and Collections (MGC) grant, and seeks approval for the continuation of the grant for a further year to end January 2023 at an investment level of no more than £1.2M.

Background

2. The SFC has provided funding to university museums since 1995 to assist with the additional financial burden of owning collections which are important to our national heritage and which have global significance, over and above their core functions of the provision of teaching and conduct of research.
3. Funding prior to AY 2012-13 was to the five university museums whose collections are **Recognised** as Nationally Significant to Scotland¹. This includes collections in the University of Edinburgh Museums, Museums of the University of St Andrews and The Glasgow School of Art, as well as the entire holdings of The Hunterian and the University of Aberdeen Collections.
4. From AY 2012-13 we extended the grant to university museums with **Accredited** collections² which added a further four universities: Heriot-Watt University, Robert Gordon University and the Universities of Dundee and Stirling. Annex A includes the HEIs with accredited collections.
5. The holdings of the nine university museums represent over 2.2 million items, 18% of Scotland's total collections. They are represented by University Museums in Scotland (UMIS) whose purpose is to connect Scotland's Accredited university museums to work collaboratively and effectively, offering mutual support and enabling them to maximise their contribution to Scotland's universities, culture and people.
6. The grant has, historically, been strongly supported by Scottish Ministers. It has five ongoing outcomes:
 - Scotland's university museum collections receive an appropriate level of collections care and management to maintain their contribution to Scotland's strategies for education and culture.
 - Harmonisation of their strategies and ambitions with their host institution's strategic plan.

¹ Recognised Collections: Run by Museums Galleries Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.

² Museum Accredited Scheme: UK industry standard for museums and galleries. The assessing body is Museums Galleries Scotland.

- Individual museum collections provide a service to a wider research community beyond the needs of an institution's own researchers.
- A high quality teaching and learning experience is provided to the wider HE community.
- Museum collections are contributing to widening access to promote and provide the opportunity of successful higher education to everyone who can benefit from it, by providing an access point to university facilities and through other community engagement and outreach work.

Why do we invest in university museums?

7. University museums are a significant intrinsic component of university provision in Scotland and make a meaningful contributions to Scottish life and culture. The value of the collections and knowledge they hold are recognised as fundamental to learning, teaching and research worldwide. Museums play an essential role in helping us understand and shape culture. They connect us to the past and encourage us to think about the future. They have evolved into cross-disciplinary institutions, connecting science, history and art, developing knowledge through research, making space for education, debate, creative and artistic activity and sustaining a spirit of place in communities.
8. The SFC funding gives the university museums a higher profile within their institution, and allows them to be more outwardly focussed on research, teaching and public engagement activities.
9. More specifically, SFC funds enables the university museums to:
 - Provide a broader service to the wider research community, where this costs them significantly more than meeting the needs of their own researchers and students.
 - Enable greater access to everyone who can benefit from them, both physically and digitally.
 - Offer significant academic and societal benefits like widening access to university. The museum spaces are the public facing side of the university. University museums have a long tradition of working with local schools, getting involved in community engagement.
 - Act as inspiration and catalysts for research, discussion and debate.
 - Attract further investment into Scotland. University museum's international engagement is particularly strong, promoting the reputation of Scottish universities worldwide, inspiring visitors to Scotland, and making a demonstrable impact on the national economy.
 - Be more visible and attract more sources of income and funding. In AY 2019-20 the SFC grant leveraged £3.5 million from host institutions and around £900,000 in external funding.

- The employment of a UMIS Co-ordinator, a post which is currently joint-funded with Museums Galleries Scotland. The post has been transformative to the UMIS partnership in terms of better co-ordination, increased profile and collaborations, and overall a clearer collective voice with wider impact.

SFC review of the MGC grant

10. SFC is committed to a review of the MGC grant towards the end of each funding period. The main objectives of the Review are to:
 - Assess the effectiveness of the MGC grant in terms of progress and outcomes, recognising the costs of hosting such collections and the value they contribute to research, to teaching and to the cultural life of Scotland.
 - Outline scope for enhancement during the next funding period.
11. The most recent review, in 2021, was carried out by the SFC executive in consultation with the Scottish Government, University Museums in Scotland (UMIS), Museums Galleries Scotland, National Museums Scotland and the UK University Museums Group. The executive also held meetings with some of the Scottish university museums.

The MGC grant review findings

12. The review found that university museums contribute to the strategic aims and broader objectives of their host universities, contribute more widely to public engagement, widening access and participation and help involve universities with their communities. We found:
 - University museums are recognised globally as highly important and valued research assets, and integral to the international research infrastructure. In 2019-20 UMIS members received over 4,500 research enquiries and visits.
 - The museums take an active role in providing experiences and broader academic engagement opportunities across the university curriculum. In 2019-20 they provided a total of 4,700 hours of teaching and teaching support involving over 7,500 students.
 - The use of UMIS members' digitised and digital collections in both teaching and research is well established, with over 165,000 collective visits to UMIS members' online collections databases in 2019-20.
 - University museums have long been the conduit between our communities and universities, breaking down perceived barriers to coming onto campus, engaging under-represented groups and running projects and programming with and for community groups and schools. In 2019-20, UMIS members recorded over 20,000 participants in school services, outreach activities and special events and welcomed over 205,000 visitors to museum displays.

13. The review concluded the conditions of the current grant were being met, that they have aligned with the Scottish Government's Culture Strategy for Scotland, and that university museums are well placed to be at the forefront of curatorial practice, providing leadership within the wider museums sector and cultural community.
14. With help from our external museum and Government stakeholders we identified seven themes for further development during the next phase of funding:
 - **Enhanced profile and contribution within their own institution:** The collections should continue to work to be better embedded within learning and teaching, research and public engagement activities.
 - **Digital infrastructure and technology:** The pandemic has brought the potential and need for digital access into sharper focus, increasing the accessibility of collections and through embedding increased digital engagement and programming.
 - **Mental health and wellbeing:** university museums can provide a safe place which can enrich and improve the student, staff and wider community experience. Recent experience points to future opportunity here.
 - **Diversity, relevance and inclusion:** we must grow our celebration of the diversity of cultures in Scotland, and demonstrate the relevance of, and the right to participate freely in, the cultural life of a diverse community.
 - **Environmental responsibility:** as a public-facing part of the university, museums should enhance sustainability, strengthen their connections with communities, and help the transition to a net-zero carbon society in Scotland.
 - **Contribution to Scottish museums sector and broader cultural practice:** Through UMIS we would expect university museums to play a leadership role within the museums sector and be a key contributor to developing policy areas. Progress can be identified and built upon.
 - **UK and International engagement:** the university's collection can support, promote and foster collaborations with museums and with academic teaching and research and thus better the reputation of Scottish universities worldwide, attracting visitors to Scotland, and making a demonstrable impact on the national economy.

Duration and level of the award proposed

15. The current MGC grant runs until the end of January 2022, a six month extension having been made to help manage Covid and SFC Review workload pressures.
16. SFC funding for University Museums and Galleries has remained static since 2012-13. Inflation has eroded the real value of the grant considerably in that

period and we have, in parallel, seen an increase in the ambition of the museums and collections, including some notable growth in activity and contribution, varying across the sector. The review that the executive carried out examined funding distributions and the value of considering an overall uplift in some detail. At that time we had hoped to recommend a multi-year award.

17. It is important that certainty of future income from SFC is given to the universities concerned at this point in the year, with only two months to the end of our current award.
18. In advance of the outcome of the Scottish Government's Spending Review process for its (and therefore SFC's) budget for FY2022-23, the executive suggests that a cautious approach is, regrettably, necessary. While a multi-year funding settlement and consideration of an appropriate level of award for future years is very much to be desired, the executive considers that this more comprehensive consideration will need to await a clearer financial outlook.
19. A further one year extension of current funding levels is therefore proposed with a longer term funding settlement to be considered by the Board once a more settled understanding of the SFC budget for FY2022-23 and the projections beyond that are known.

Funding allocations

20. There has always been a large variation in the funding allocations due to the different scale of the museums but we acknowledge that this distribution (of scale) has evolved since 1995. The notable award is to the University of Glasgow, reflecting the scale of the Hunterian collection. During the review we have had discussions with stakeholders on how we can make the distributions fairer and more equitable.
21. Given the restricted affordability we must assume for 2022-23 and the desirability of re-considering distributions at the same time as the overall envelope, the executive recommend the Board re-visits this grant following the settlement of the 2022-23 SFC budget and takes a rounded view of the future allocations. The current allocations are as shown in the table below, and we suggest extending them by one year.

Table 1: SFC current (and recommended) annual funding allocations

Institution	Current award
University of Glasgow	£726,000
Glasgow School of Art	£198,000
University of Aberdeen	£114,000
University of Edinburgh	£82,000
University of St Andrews	£34,000
Heriot-Watt University	£11,500
University of Dundee	£11,500
Robert Gordon University	£11,500
University of Stirling	£11,500
Total	£1,200,000

22. When the Board does return to these allocations, if it agrees to do so, the executive will particularly direct the Board’s attention to the smaller institutions and to the evolving circumstances of the two largest recipients.

Risk assessment

23. Providing funding to university museums on the basis above is a low risk as it represents continuity of an established relationship.

Equality and diversity assessment

24. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this grant.

Financial implications

25. As the recommendation here is for funding of more than £1M, permission from Scottish Ministers to consider such an allocation has been sought.
26. The approval sought here would require funding from SFC of £1.2M across Financial Years 2021-22 and 2022-23, to be drawn from HE Non-Core Funds.

Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

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- Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the details of the funding agreement with the universities hosting these collections for the period concerned.

Publication

27. This paper will be published on the SFC Website

Further information

28. Contact: Stuart Fancey, Director of Research and Innovation, tel: 0131 313 6559, email: sfancey@sfc.ac.uk.

The universities and SSI's with accredited collections

Institution	Collection
University of Glasgow	The Entire Collection of the Hunterian Kelvin Hall
Glasgow School of Art	The Charles Rennie Mackintosh Collection
University of Aberdeen	The Entire Museum Collection is recognised as a Collection of National Significance: Anatomy Museum, Zoology Museum, and King's Museum.
University of Edinburgh	The Historical Musical Collection at Reid Concert Hall and St Cecilia's Hall Anatomy Museum Centre for Research Collections and Art Collection Cockburn Museum of Geology Fine Art Collections
University of St Andrews	The Chemistry, Historic Scientific Instruments and Heritage Collections at MUSA
University of Dundee	Museum Collections
University of Stirling	Art Collection
Heriot-Watt University	University Museum and Archives
Robert Gordon University	University Art and Heritage Collection