

Policy document for the strategic development of
The Manchester Museum

ACADEMIC POLICY
AND STRATEGY

Reviewed and endorsed by MAAB:

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1 MUSEUM ACADEMIC POLICY

1.1 The mission of the University of Manchester

- 1.1.1 All academic activity which draws on the resources of The Manchester Museum will have a clear purpose and meet specified standards. Such activity, expressed in the Museum's academic policy and strategy, will contribute to the delivery of the highly aspirational vision and academic goals of the University of Manchester, which are expressed in the University's mission:

“To make the University of Manchester, already an internationally distinguished centre of research, innovation, learning and scholarly enquiry, one of the leading universities in the world by 2015.”¹

1.2 The mission of The Manchester Museum

- 1.2.1 The academic policy and strategy is also consistent with the mission of the Museum, which states that:

“The Manchester Museum enables people to explore, enjoy, question, understand and reflect on the diversity and inter-relationships of humanity and the natural world, working in partnership with local and global communities, in ways that help to achieve the international ambitions of the University of Manchester.”²

- 1.2.2 The academic activities of the Manchester Museum, articulated in its strategic plan, are to:

- undertake, collaborate in and facilitate high quality teaching, learning and research relevant to the subject areas of the Museum
- add value to the University of Manchester by pro-actively contributing to its academic purposes and to its cultural interface with wider society
- generate innovative research programmes by fostering a vibrant academic environment in the Museum and building creative academic partnerships with other parts of the University, and with other institutions and individuals
- make the knowledge and expertise of the staff accessible to users through publications, exhibitions, public programmes and the website.
- interpret, contextualise and promote public awareness of the research achievements of the University

- 1.2.3 The Manchester Museum's long-term goals are to develop and sustain strong academic links with all parts of the University through:

- contributing to HE teaching and providing a learning resource
- the Museum Academic Advisory Board
- the establishment and support of Museum Academic Joint Appointments
- undertaking, collaborating in and facilitating high quality, peer-reviewed research
- providing an interface between the University of Manchester's research output and the wider public.

- 1.2.4 As a university museum, The Manchester Museum is, in every sense, a ‘place of learning’. Academic integrity will therefore be expected to inform and underpin all the curatorial activities and public programmes of the Museum, which will also contribute to its academic profile.

NOTES 1. The University's *Mission* is quoted from *Manchester 2015: The University of Manchester Strategic Plan*, in draft June 2004.

2. This mission statement for the Museum was debated and endorsed in principle by the Manchester Museum Committee on 7 June 2004, when it considered the Museum's *Strategic Plan 2004/05 onwards*.

1.3 Definitions

- 1.3.1 The term 'academic' is used in this Policy to define activities that extend knowledge and deepen understanding in an intellectually rigorous way, through research, teaching and learning in the higher education environment.
- 1.3.2 The term 'outcome' is used in this Policy in a broad sense to incorporate a wide variety of methods for disseminating knowledge (see 2.4).

1.4 Ethics

- 1.4.1 All research undertaken or supported by The Manchester Museum will comply with the Code of Ethics of the UK Museums Association. In particular, research and researchers will:
- make the results of research publicly accessible
 - respect and contribute to the protection of natural environments and cultural identity
 - treat human remains with dignity and respect
 - respect the interests of originating communities
 - undertake research on material of sensitivity to indigenous communities only in partnership with those communities
 - undertake research on material of significance to the academic community of the country of origin in collaboration with that community whenever possible
 - refrain absolutely from research on material whose provenance may be in doubt and indicate an illicit origin
 - ensure that the material on which research has been based is available to other scholars
 - undertake research field trips which respect international legislation and the national policy for expeditions prepared under the Convention on Biological Diversity (WRI/IUC/UNEP, 1992).

2 MUSEUM ACADEMIC STRATEGY

2.1 Strategic imperatives

2.1.1 The Manchester Museum will support and develop academic activity that:

- contributes actively to the academic purposes of the University of Manchester
- meets the needs of the Museum's audiences
- achieves the strategic goals of the Museum.

2.2 Generic priorities

2.2.1 Within these strategic imperatives, Museum staff will undertake, collaborate in or facilitate (as researchers, research partners, or using the Museum as a site for research) in academic activity that:

- (i) is integrated into existing programmes or contributes to the initiation of innovative programmes in the University (particularly in the development of cross-disciplinary activity) in:
 - high quality research (suitable for submission in national Research Assessment Exercises)
 - teaching and learning at undergraduate or postgraduate level
 - presentation of University research to a wider public
- (ii) draws on or contributes to one or more of the following unique strengths of the Manchester Museum:
 - collections, data and archives
 - fieldwork
 - public programmes and audience development
 - museological practice
- (iii) seeks to increase or refine knowledge in one or more of the following areas of enquiry:
 - taxonomy, typology and descriptive praxis
 - the broader context of the Museum's collections
 - interpretation and communication
 - museology
- (iv) and creates, strengthens and sustains intellectually accessible links between the academic world and wider society, through the range of public programmes and interpretative media that the Museum can deploy.

2.2.2 The Manchester Museum will build close partnerships with key individuals in the academic Faculties (e.g. deans of research, teaching and learning, heads of research centres, research business managers/co-ordinators, members of the Museum Academic Advisory Board) in order to develop and maintain a mechanism for exchange of information on research, expertise, personnel and opportunities for academic collaboration. Building on this dialogue, the Museum will develop and facilitate links between every Museum area and the relevant academic unit, through collaboration via:

- teaching and module/course development
- supervision of under- and post-graduate students
- student projects
- work placements
- field trips

- joint research projects
- seminars or conferences
- joint purchase/sharing of analytical equipment
- field work and field courses
- Museum staff submitting to RAE through cognate faculty
- establishment of Museum Academic Joint Appointment posts
- the Museum as a focus for public engagement with and understanding of science and research on behalf of the University, through displays, events and activities
- the Museum as a partner in Widening Participation activities, encouraging a broad recruitment to the University.

2.3 Resourcing academic activity in the Museum

- 2.3.1 Staff time allocated to research activities will always be balanced in concert with the strategic priorities of the Museum in its collection management and public programme activities.
- 2.3.2 A cross-divisional panel within the Museum will assess and approve all research proposals from Museum staff to ensure that they meet the Museum's aims, objectives and priorities as defined in this policy, and that all resource implications have been considered.
- 2.3.3 Museum staff will seek to increase the funds and personnel available for research through bids (prepared collaboratively whenever appropriate with colleagues in faculty) to relevant research funding agencies.
- 2.3.4 Museum staff will bid for funds for additional personnel and equipment to support research projects only when it can be demonstrated that the Museum has the capacity to house, store and maintain them.
- 2.3.5 Staff time and other resources invested by the Museum in research that contributes added value to an RAE outcome will result in an apportionment of QR (Quality Review) income to the Museum from the relevant unit of assessment, for re-investment by the Museum in those activities that support that academic output in the Museum.
- 2.3.6 Staff time and other resources invested by the Museum in contributing to HE teaching will be funded through normal load transfer arrangements for taught courses, and an appropriate disbursement to the Museum in respect of joint supervision of postgraduate research students.

2.4 Research outcomes and impact

- 2.4.1 Research in the Museum will have outcomes that are:
- academically highly valued and/or
 - widely accessible.
- 2.4.2 Museum staff will present their research in the form of
- academic publications
 - literature in the public realm (including catalogues)
 - exhibitions
 - the Museum's website
 - seminars, conferences and talks
 - public programmes.

- 2.4.3 Where appropriate, academic research carried out in the Museum can be published in a form and in fora to make it eligible for submission to the RAE, in discussion with the relevant cognate academic unit.

3 THE MUSEUM'S PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC GOALS (2004-2009)

3.1 **History of The Manchester Museum**

- 3.1.1 Publish the first comprehensive, academically researched, history of the Museum by 2007.

3.2 **Museum Academic Joint Appointments**

- 3.2.1 Ensure that mutually beneficial partnerships have been developed with academic Schools in the University to support the establishment of at least four MAJA posts by 2006.

3.3 **The Natural History Galleries**

- 3.3.1 A particular focus between 2004 and 2009 will be the complete re-display of the Museum's natural history galleries on three floors of the 1885 Waterhouse building. This will entail the building of new academic partnerships to help inform the interpretation and re-contextualisation of natural history in the Museum. This research will stress interdisciplinary approaches to highlight the interrelationships between natural environments and humans, and set them in their academic and historical contexts. The work towards the new gallery will also be a forum through which strands of faculty-based research will be contextualised and disseminated to a wider public, thus bringing together the academic work on broad issues within the University of Manchester (such as globalisation and environmental concern) with the interests and perspectives of the Museum's wider community, including visitors and local community groups.

4 POLICY REVIEW

- 4.1 The Museum's Academic Policy and Strategy will be reviewed annually by the MAAB (or its successor), and any revised plans submitted to the Manchester Museum Committee (or its successor) for approval.