



National
Museums
Scotland

Guide to borrowing from the collections of National Museums Scotland

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CONTACT DETAILS

For general enquiries email: loans@nms.ac.uk or go to our website:
www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/collections-departments/collections-services/

1 INTRODUCTION

National Museums Scotland's outgoing loans programme is an essential part of opening up the collections to new audiences. Many objects from the collection are on long-term loan to venues throughout the UK and overseas. A large number of objects are also made available for short-term loans every year.

The purpose of this guide is to help you successfully submit a loan request and borrow from our collections. In the following pages we outline who can borrow, what information we require, our decision-making process and what happens once a loan is approved. National Museums Scotland's policy on lending and borrowing can be found in our Collection Information and Access Policy: www.nms.ac.uk/media/761975/nms-collections-information-and-access-policy-2015.pdf.

The flowchart on [page 7](#) provides an overview of the whole borrowing process with references to the sections in this guide.

The outgoing loans programme is managed and delivered by the Registrar team in the Department of Collections Services. Contact details are noted on page 2, or can be found on our website: www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/services-and-expertise/loans/.

2 WHO CAN BORROW?

National Museums Scotland considers loan requests from any museum, gallery or public organisation for the benefit of public display and/or research purposes leading to a publication. Loans to commercial organisations or private individuals are only considered if objects are made accessible to the public and National Museums Scotland's loan conditions can be met.

3 HOW TO REQUEST A LOAN

3.1 Submitting a formal loan request

Loan requests should be submitted via the online loan request form www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/services-and-expertise/loans/borrowing-from-our-collections/request-a-loan-online or in writing to the Director, National Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF.

Your request should include the following information:

- List of objects requested for loan, including National Museums Scotland accession numbers if possible.
- Dates and title of your exhibition or project.
- Name and full contact details of the exhibition/project organiser and venue(s).
- The scope of the exhibition or project. Is this a touring exhibition? Will a publication be produced to accompany the exhibition?
- Justification for inclusion of National Museums Scotland objects. Why are these objects important to the success of the exhibition or project?
- An acknowledgement that you understand National Museums Scotland's loan conditions and agree to cover costs relating to the loan.

3.2 Selecting objects

If you are not sure which objects you would like to borrow, please seek advice from National Museums Scotland's curatorial departments. Contact details can be found on the National Museums Scotland website www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/collections-departments/. Departmental Administrators will put you in touch with the relevant Curator.

You can also use the Search Our Collections tool on our website to view a selection of objects from the collections. www.nms.ac.uk/explore/search-our-collections/

Please make sure that you allow enough time to pursue these enquiries. If you would like to view any objects in advance of the loan, we recommend that you make these arrangements well in advance of the exhibition or project start date. Loans for the purposes of research should be requested through the relevant curatorial department.

3.3 Notice period

Loan requests for UK venues must be submitted at least six months before the loan is required, while a notice period of nine months is desirable for international loans. These lead-in times allow for a process of assessment to ascertain if the objects and venue are suitable and for the necessary object preparation and loan arrangements to take place.

4 THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Once a loan request is received it is taken to National Museums Scotland's Collections Committee chaired by the Director of Collections. The Committee meets eleven times a year, and approves or declines a loan based on the criteria outlined below. This decision is made in line with expertise from National Museums Scotland's Curators, Conservators, Displays team, and Registrars.

The following criteria are used to assess an outgoing loan request:

- A minimum of six months' notice before the loan is required.
- Availability of objects, e.g. not required for National Museums Scotland exhibitions or projects.
- Physical condition of the loan objects and their suitability for travel.
- Resources available to facilitate the loan.
- Suitability of the borrowing venue, including the borrower's ability to meet professional standards.
- Status and relevance of the object to the exhibition or project theme and content
- Public access to the objects.
- Impact on public displays at National Museums Scotland.
- How recently an object has been out on loan or display.
- The potential of knowledge generation and lasting legacy.

The Registrar will notify you of the Committee's decision. If the request is approved, it is on the condition that the borrower is willing and able to meet all of the loan conditions stipulated by National Museums Scotland.

5 PREPARING A LOAN FOR DISPATCH

5.1 Conservation assessments

Once the loan has been provisionally approved, a conservator will do a full assessment of the objects to ensure they are robust enough for loan. If they are not suitable, you will be informed as soon as possible and alternative objects for loan may be discussed. If any treatment is required we will discuss this with you and outline any associated costs.

Conservators will recommend suitable environmental conditions, packing, transport and courier requirements for the objects, assess display plans and provide condition reports to travel with the objects while on loan.

5.2 Loan venue assessments

The Registrar team will request facilities reports, environmental readings and gallery plans to verify that National Museums Scotland's loan conditions are achievable. Please provide detailed information in these reports and send any additional documents you think will be helpful. The more information the Registrar has, the easier it will be to progress the loan.

A visit from the Arts Council England's National Security Adviser to discuss your facilities and security measures may also be required.

5.3 Loan conditions and agreement

Before the loan material is dispatched, both parties must have a signed copy of National Museums Scotland's Outgoing Loan Agreement. This document confirms your acceptance of National Museums Scotland's loan conditions.

6 REPRODUCTION REQUESTS

If photography is required, for example for an exhibition catalogue, reproduction requests should be directed to the Image Library www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/services-and-expertise/image-library/. Please give as much advance notice as possible when submitting reproduction requests.

7 COSTS

7.1 General loan costs

While National Museums Scotland will make every effort to keep loan costs to a minimum, as the borrower you will be responsible for all costs incurred by the loan, including dispatch and return of the objects at the end of the loan.

The most expensive aspect of an outgoing loan is usually transport and courier costs. Methods of transport and courier requirements will be assessed by Conservation, Registrars and Curatorial Departments on a case by case basis taking into account the objects' size and condition, complexity of installation and the borrower's project budget and resources.

Loan objects will usually only be handled by National Museums Scotland staff, so you should assume that at least one courier will accompany and install the loan object.

The cost of new crates or packing materials that have to be purchased specifically for the loan, conservation work that has been outsourced and all transport and courier expenses will be passed on to the borrower at the end of the loan period. The Registrar will inform you of estimated costs at the beginning of the loan period.

7.2 Loans to international borrowers

For international loans, in addition to the costs outlined above, a loan management fee of £300 per venue and the cost of conservation time, which includes treatment, condition reporting and specialist packing, will be passed on to the borrower.

7.3 Loans to borrowers within the UK

For loans within the UK, the borrower will not normally be asked to pay a loan fee or cover staff time costs. However, for complex loans or those requiring a significant contribution of National Museums Scotland's staff time, fees or special conditions may apply. Special conditions may include a higher level of acknowledgement to reflect National Museums Scotland's contribution to the exhibition or project.

8 INSURANCE

National Museums Scotland's loan objects must be insured 'nail to nail' through a Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS) or commercial insurance. National Museums Scotland will always try to use Government Indemnity where possible to avoid the cost of insurance for the borrower. Your venue must meet the conditions set out in the GIS guidelines, and you must agree to accept a minimum liability for the value of the objects. More information and the guidelines are available on the Arts Council's website www.gov.uk/government-indemnity-scheme

When indemnity cover is not possible, commercial insurance will be purchased by the Registrar through National Museums Scotland's commercial insurance broker and the insurance premium will be passed on to the borrower. If you wish to use another insurance provider you will need to submit details of the insurance policy and an insurance certificate to National Museums Scotland for approval prior to the dispatch of the loan.

9 LONG TERM LOANS

Long-term outgoing loans are agreed for a fixed term and will be reviewed on a regular basis. At the end of the loan period, the loan may be renewed for a further term if both the borrower and National Museums Scotland agree to an extension. The review process enables National Museums Scotland to verify the objects' location and condition, and to confirm that insurance cover and contact details are up to date. Photographs of the objects or a visit by a National Museums Scotland representative may be required to assess the condition of the objects. It is the borrower's responsibility to cover any costs associated with the review and renewal of long-term loans.

The Registrar team must be informed immediately of any changes or improvements to the borrowing venue that affect the display of the loan objects. They should also be notified of any relevant changes in staff resulting in new contact details for the loan.

GUIDE TO BORROWING FLOWCHART

