UMIS Annual Report

2021 – 2022

# **Our year in figures:**

* **2,181,233** objects in our collections
* **102.6** FTE core funded staff
* **268** volunteers
* **3,169** hours of teaching and teaching support to over **6,000** students on almost **200** courses.
* **6,884** direct research enquiries and visits (up from even pre-Covid 2018/19 levels of 4,764)
* **441,428** visits to online collections databases
* **222,287** visits to exhibitions and displays
* **18,000** participants in physical school services, outreach activities, and special events
* **3,200** participants in digital school services, outreach activities and special events
* **270,000** downloads of online resources
* Over**1 million** visits to UMIS members’ websites
* Over **2.25 million** Twitter impressions for UMIS members’ posts
* Over **80,000** social media followers
* Over **£630,000** of additional income earned (excluding grants)

# **Learning & teaching**

University museum collections enrich the teaching experience and contribute across Scotland’s higher and further education institutions. This involves both the use of collections and expertise to teach within the museums’ host universities, and a role as a teaching resource beyond their host universities – including internationally - contributing to the broader learning ecosystem.

## Interdisciplinary teaching

Due to the breadth of their collections and the knowledge of their staff, our members have **meaningful involvement across disciplines and schools** and throughout academia, furthering cross-disciplinary knowledge.

* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** created digital resources for courses, particularly the MLitt Museum Studies and MSc Osteoarchaeology.
* **University of Edinburgh Anatomical Museum** is now home to the Edinburgh Atlas Facility (Anatomy Teaching Lab Additive Manufacturing and Scanning Facility), a 3D scanning lab that is used by Anatomy staff and students for teaching and research.
* **The Hunterian** staff at the University of Glasgow are currently supervising PhDs in geosciences, geology, history of science, art history and information studies, and their facilities support 15 Textile Conservation MPhils.
* **RGU Art & Heritage** ran a high-level pedagogic project with the School of Art. ‘Sense of Place Through Objects’ involved all BA (Hons) undergraduate students (165 - across Fine Art & Design), introducing students to the idea of site-responsive approaches to working.

UMIS members provide academic engagement opportunities on courses as diverse as Anatomical Sciences and Animation to Urban Planning and Zoology and in the 2021/22 academic year provided **3,169 hours of teaching and teaching support** to over **6,000 students** on almost **200 courses**.

## Teaching in partnership

To maximise the use of the distributed national collections in their care and enable more students and academic colleagues to access this rich resource, UMIS members **work with a range of partners across multiple higher and further education institutions**.

* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** has regularly hosted visits by North East Scotland College art classes to their Zoology Museum and has taught sessions on local archaeology to HNC/HND Countryside and Environment Management course at Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) Aberdeen.
* **University of Dundee Museums’** ‘Nature of Empire’ decolonising project has been used by students in Liverpool and Leiden.
* **University of Edinburgh Collections** have provided teaching to students from Napier University and a module on social prescribing through heritage and museums for the International Museums Education MA course at the University of Glasgow.
* **University of Stirling Art Collection** run a joint degree and joint portfolio programme with Forth Valley College, as well as working with the Royal Conservatoire annually.

UK-wide and internationally, UMIS members have provided teaching to a number of institutions. Examples include:

* **The Hunterian** – students from University of Wyoming, USA; Bard Graduate School, NYC; University of Amsterdam; and University of Tübingen.
* **University of Edinburgh Collections** - students from Northumbria University; Illinois State University, USA; and musical instrument courses in Cremona, Italy (Musical Instruments); and University of Nottingham Medical School Anatomy Department (Anatomical Collection).

## Online and hybrid teaching

Despite the fact that students are, for the main part, back on campus in the universities, online and hybrid teaching both remains an essential part of the learning experience and has allowed the UMIS members to use and share their collections in new and innovative ways.

In 2020 UMIS secured funding from the AHRC Covid-19 Urgency Scheme for the ‘Online Teaching and Learning with Digitised Collections in a Higher Education Context’ project to track and evaluate the capacity, capabilities, and best practice in digital teaching with collections, with the ultimate aim of developing models to **ensure greater uptake in, and satisfaction with, online teaching**. The report and outputs will be published on the UMIS website later this academic year. Prompted by the project, UMIS has started discussions this year with RLUK (Research Libraries UK) around the development of Virtual Teaching Spaces.

The majority of UMIS members continue to deliver online and hybrid teaching and resources within their host institutions. Two examples include:

* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** - significant use of visualisers, digital images for recorded lectures, teaching by video-conferences, and creation of digital resources for courses, particularly the MLitt Museum Studies and MSc Osteoarchaeology.
* **University of Edinburgh Collections** – as mentioned, the use of the Anatomical Museum as home to the Edinburgh Atlas Facility (Anatomy Teaching Lab Additive Manufacturing and Scanning Facility) enables 3D digital scanning of objects and collections to be used by Anatomy staff and students for teaching and research.

# **Research**

University museums are recognised globally as highly important and valued research assets, integral to the international research infrastructure, due to the collections and knowledge they hold, and enhance their institutions’ – and Scotland’s – reputation in this field. UMIS members are also a significant resource for post-graduate researchers, and work with organisations such as SGSAH to provide research-based opportunities and placements.

In the 2021/22 academic year, UMIS recorded **6,884 direct research enquiries and visits** (up from even pre-Covid 2018/19 levels of 4,764) and **441,428 visits to online collections databases.**

## Collections information

Due to their unique position to research our collections, and access research and academic resources, **university museums are acknowledged to hold, and to continue to develop, provenance information** – enabling us to interrogate and continue to explore our collections more fully than other parts of the heritage sector. This year, examples include:

* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** - Significant enhancements were made to the information available to researchers for the North American, Scottish and West African cultural collections, and Zoology (particularly Mollusca) through various projects.
* **University of Dundee Museums** - Numerous additions made to the online version of their collections database to facilitate research, and the Public Art Dundee project has now launched a searchable website featuring over 650 pieces of public art, forming a significant research resource.
* **The Hunterian** - Old Ways, New Roads project (undertaken in 2020/21) launched the signature research hub website <https://oldwaysnewroads.co.uk/> leading to further engagement.
* **Heriot-Watt Museum** also participated in the JISC funded JSTOR Community Collections project with more material from their most widely accessed textile collections added during the year.

## Working with partners

By working collaboratively, university museums **share research expertise, enhance the quality of their research, and can disseminate this more effectively**. UMIS members work with – and develop - research partnerships both nationally and internationally.

* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** have, over the past year, worked with National Museums Scotland, Museums Galleries Scotland, the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, Hildesheim, and in were involved in the launch of the North-East Scotland Heritage Network and a Scottish Subject Specialist Network for Archaeology Collections.
* **University of Dundee Museums’** ‘Woven Together’ project is researching the history of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in Dundee, working with various partners including the Abertay Historical Society, Dundee City Council and various community groups.
* **University of Edinburgh Collections** has worked collaboratively with the National Cheng Kung University, Minneapolis College art & design, Institute for Anatomy, Jena, Germany, University College Cork, Queen’s University Belfast, University of Melbourne, Black Hills State University, University of Chicago Medicine, and with international partnerships including the Una Europa Museums group, Musical Instrument Museums Online, and the Musical Instrument Resource Network.
* **The Hunterian** has carried out notable projects in partnership with the Georg-August University of Göttingen, Germany, to develop a postgraduate Summer School programme combining academic and curatorial expertise to promote interdisciplinary museum practice; and collaborated with The Kelvin Centre for Conservation and Cultural Heritage, and the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Cardiff University, on detailed scientific analysis of a coin hoard discovered in 1713 and attributed to the ‘Roman Emperor’ Sponsian.
* **The Glasgow School of Art’s Archives & Collections** has been working with researchers in the School of Design to secure seed-funding to develop a research cluster ‘Making Heritage: Exploring Archives and Special Collections for Creative Practice and Art School Pedagogy’.

In addition to the above, the **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** and **The Hunterian** are consortium partners - along with National Museums Scotland and Glasgow Life - on the ‘Reveal and Connect’ project. Funded by Museums Galleries Scotland, the project works with international partners and will **publish a national review of African and Caribbean collections** in Scotland, developing guidance and training materials to support museums and communities to gain the knowledge and confidence to understand, care for and make best use of these collections. <https://bit.ly/RevealConnectUMIS>

# **Employability**

## Student employability

UMIS members not only actively provide opportunities to use museums’ collections and knowledge of their staff within university courses, but **university museums are also employers within their institutions**. Opportunities offered by the museums develop transferrable skills, provide workplace learning and, in many cases, are credit bearing or lead to recognition in students’ enhanced transcripts, all improving their longer-term employment options. This year, these opportunities have included:

* + Paid and unpaid internships/apprenticeships
	+ Volunteering opportunities across their operations (UMIS members recorded **227 student volunteers** working with their museums in 2021/22)
	+ Work placements for undergraduates and postgraduates
	+ Student ambassadorships
	+ Board representative opportunities for students

Specific examples include:

* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** - Students benefitted from engagement with the University’s museums through three funded internships and the Student Ambassador scheme, with student interns and a paid Student Ambassador working on digital and social media during the continued physical closure.
* **University of Dundee Museums** – The museums provided eight formal work placements for undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Universities of Dundee and St Andrews, plus informal work experience for five other Dundee students or graduates.
* **The Hunterian** – The service has established skills-based programmes for students including the MuSE volunteers and the Hunterian Associates Programme (offering an opportunity for research students to undertake and develop skills in public engagement). 96 students in total are registered for volunteering alongside 3 PGR Hunterian Associates. By the end of this academic year, 16 students will have undertaken work-based placements (20 credits towards course assessment). The Hunterian also hosted an SGSAH intern from University of Edinburgh and is supervising 4 applied dissertations, worth 60 credits.
* **Museums of the University of St Andrews** - Offers structured work experience through skills-builder volunteering opportunities (e.g. digital engagement volunteers) where students are matched up with a mentor to help them develop workplace skills, based around the graduate attributes. They also partner on a regular basis with student societies and networks for all student events programmes helping develop the skills of students to plan and deliver events.
* **University of Stirling Art Collection** - Provides work placement opportunities for undergraduate, postgraduate, and international summer school students as well as placements for students at other academic institutions. This includes credit-bearing placements.

## Wider upskilling and employability

In addition to placements for students, UMIS members also provide opportunities for those in the broader community through volunteering, or through specific programmes for young people, including:

* The Kickstart Scheme - provides funding to create new jobs for 16–24-year-olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment
* Modern Apprenticeships - deliver skills to apprentices (anyone over 16, and primarily aimed at 16–24-year-olds) who work, learn, and earn while gaining an industry-recognised qualification

UMIS members worked with **41 community volunteers** over the past academic year.

Specific examples of wider upskilling work included:

* **University of Dundee Museums** Curator is a tutor and committee member of Lifelong Learning Dundee, formed to run day and evening classes for the community after the University ended its Continuing Education courses. These classes have now continued both online and in-person.
* **University of Edinburgh Collections** ran its Volunteer Summer School offering an intensive, week-long course to gain hands-on experience of working with collections, developed a new volunteering pathway in partnership with Access to Industry to equip participants with digital skills, and worked with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) on their ‘New Routes to Potential’ pathway, with DYW referring pupils to the museums for work experience.
* **The Hunterian** supported a Kickstart role in the Education team to provide supported employment opportunities to a young person interested in working in the sector.

# **Internationalisation**

As well as having an integral role in international research, UMIS and its members continue to partner with colleagues internationally on both an ongoing basis and through discrete projects.

## Scotland’s global profile

University museums regularly share knowledge more broadly within the cultural sector, strengthening the cultural industry nationally and raising their profile globally.

* Through involvement in both Universeum (the European university museum network) and ICOM-UMAC (the international university museum network), Scotland’s university museums **retain a high profile with colleagues globally** and are held in high regard due to UMIS’s collaborative approach and its Scottish sector insight. In July 2022, representatives of the **University of Aberdeen, The Hunterian** and the **UMIS Coordinator** delivered sessions and workshops as part of the Universeum conference held in Belgium, and The Hunterian presented at the ICOM-UMAC conference in Prague.
* UMIS members involved in the AHRC-funded ‘Online Teaching and Learning with Digitised Collections in a Higher Education Context’ also presented at the DCDC22 (Discovering Collections Discovering Communities) virtual conference organised by RLUK, The National Archives and Jisc.
* This year, UMIS held a meeting with the Scottish Government team heading up the planned **Cultural Diplomacy Strategy**. The university museums’ international relationships, coupled with their insight into the museums and heritage sector in Scotland, was acknowledged to give a valuable perspective on the strategy’s development.
* UMIS members have positions on the **ethics committees** for both the Museums Association (UK) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

## UK and international loans

As the Museums Association puts it, ‘Museums lend their collections in order to increase the public benefit that can be derived from them, to promote access, to increase knowledge and understanding and to support other museums. They balance their role in safeguarding items for future generations with their obligation to optimise access for and engagement with present day audiences.’ (Smarter Loans. Museums Association, 2012) As well as lending extensively to Scottish heritage organisations, UK and international loans allow global audiences to encounter and engage with UMIS’ collections. Over the past year, collections have been loaned to:

* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** - material for exhibitions in the Roemer- und-Pelizaeus Museum, Hildesheim; Denver Museum of Nature and Science; Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen; and Museum August Kestner, Hannover.
* **University of Edinburgh Collections** – loans to the British Library and the Hepworth Wakefield.
* **The Hunterian** – notable loans to Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, Barcelona; National Gallery of Art; Washington Royal Academy of Arts; Tate; and the Petit Palais.
* **The Glasgow School of Art Archives & Collections** - items to Baltimore, Nashville, Albuquerque, and Florida (as part of Glasgow Museum’s US tour of ‘Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow Style’) and new loans to the Museum of Modern Art in Collioure, France and the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.
* **University of Stirling Art Collection** – loan to the ‘John Craxton: A Greek Soul’ exhibition which will tour to the Benaki Museum in Athens; Chania Municipal Art Gallery on Crete; and the Mesher, Istanbul.

# **Widening access and participation**

Opening up collections and providing outreach and engagement activities to broader communities is core to the mission of all museums – enabling university museums to often be the first experience many have with higher education, breaking down perceived barriers to coming onto campus. This, in turn, supports universities’ ‘third mission’.

## Physical access

Following the lifting of all restrictions and opening of venues (which in some cases, due to ventilation and other issues, weren’t fully open until early in 2022), UMIS members saw numbers of physical visits start to increase. In the 2021/22 academic year, they recorded **222,287 visits to exhibitions and displays** which, although an increase on the previous two years, has not yet returned to pre-Covid numbers of just over 400,000 in 2018/19. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that as public confidence returns, and with no re-imposing of restrictions, these numbers will continue to rise.

Likewise, participants in **physical school services, outreach activities, and special events numbered just over 18,000**, with pre-Covid (2018/19) numbers being almost 29,000. In some cases this reduction in numbers was due to staffing issues, and in others down to venues being unable to open, but again, evidence suggest that these numbers continue to increase.

## Equity, diversity, and inclusion

University museums are increasingly becoming involved in issues of social justice and are running projects and programming to **connect to the diversity of communities** to become as inclusive and representative as possible.

* To mark 2022’s Autism Acceptance Week/Month, **UMIS** organised an online event for staff from its member museums, led by two autistic colleagues and offering insight into autistic perspectives of culture. The event took the form of presentations, Q&A, and discussions, and was accompanied by an online resource signposting autistic-led organisations in Scotland.
* ‘Second Chancers’ (a partnership of **University of Stirling Art Collection**, the University’s Faculty of Social Sciences, Community Justice Scotland and regional support organisations), not only explored the positive impact of the Social Justice System vs. Prison using the personal experiences of ex-offenders and those involved in their recovery, but also critically inserts humanity into considerations of justice, enhancing the University’s educational mission. <https://bit.ly/SecondChancersUoS>
* **Museums of the University of St Andrews’** ‘Moving Art, Connecting Voices’ (in partnership with Fife Council) aims to brings together young people from Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Syria, and Vietnam who have recently moved to Scotland and unites them with pupils from Levenmouth Academy in Fife. The group create art, poetry, and music to explore their identity and cultures and tackle the media’s portrayal of “migrants” as a faceless whole. The project is part of the wider Re:Collecting Empire project, designed to identify missing stories within their collections. <https://bit.ly/MovingArtConnectingVoices>
* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** are undertaking ‘Open to All’ a digital access project, working with local equalities organisations including One Stop Shop Aberdeen, Grampian Regional Equality Council and North East Sensory Services and Autism Understanding Scotland, as well as academic and international communities. The project aims to design more inclusive and sustainable digital collections interactions and open up collections to those for whom physical access is more challenging. <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/news/14698/>
* **University of Dundee Museums** have created a sensory backpack for use in care homes and with community groups, with a focus on being as accessible as possible. They have included a variety of items, including some that would benefit people with visual impairment and dementia such as etchings, scents of flowers, and tactile sculptures. <https://learningspaces.dundee.ac.uk/dundeeuniculture/2022/04/25/uod-museums-sensory-backpack/> In addition, their ‘Woven Together Dundee’ project is a community-based volunteer research project exploring the history of people of colour in Dundee, in collaboration with the Abertay Historical Society and Dundee City Council. <https://woventogetherdundee.wixsite.com/woventogetherdundee/home>
* **RGU Art & Heritage** (as part of the University’s Library Service) worked in partnership with the Mobile Art School – a community outreach project aimed at engaging and connecting schools across Aberdeen and beyond. The project worked with schools and community groups who were particularly impacted by lockdown to create digital ways for audiences to explore their collections remotely, including the use of VR and AR technology. <https://bit.ly/DigitalTapestry>
* **University of Edinburgh Collections**, in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland, Museums Galleries Edinburgh and SCRAN, ran ‘Capital Culture’ - a summer programme devised with Edinburgh Young Carers to give young carers some respite during the summer months and improve their confidence in navigating and enjoying the culture of the city centre. <https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/stories/edinburgh-young-carers-exhibition-city-art-centre>

## Digital engagement

Building on the development of digital engagement during Covid, the UMIS members have continued to provide, and have further developed, **opportunities for audiences to engage with activities, exhibitions, and experiences online**. In the last academic year:

* **Over 3,200 individuals** participated in a range of digital school services, outreach activities and special events.
* The UMIS members saw **almost 270,000 downloads of online resources** and **over 1 million visits to their websites**
* UMIS members saw **over 2.25 million Twitter impressions** for their posts and between them have over 80,000 social media followers
* UMIS continued to build its social media presence primarily through Twitter. Participation in popular campaigns and sharing of activities led **88,000 impressions** on, and over **6,400 visits** to, the UMIS profile from August 2021 – July 2022.

Individual UMIS members projects also concentrated on both engaging audiences online, and making information more accessible to a wider audience:

* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** enhanced the accessibility of online information and events by drawing on the learning from the ‘Open to All’ project, including survey analysis (following co-design) and discussions with specialist partner organisations. The year also saw the appointment of a fixed-term Assistant Curator (Public Engagement) with a focus on digital engagement.
* **University of Dundee Museums** was one of only five museums in the UK chosen to feature in the BBC’s ‘Art That Made Us’ festival specially curated online exhibitions on the BBC Rewind website. The Curator also helped to organise five online events for the Scottish Society for Art History and the monthly events programme of the Abertay Historical Society, and their videos and other online resources have also continued to prove popular.
* **University of Edinburgh Collections** provided a range of online exhibitions throughout the year, most notably ‘Sea Change’ (see the Environmental responsibility section) which was their first exhibition to feature digital loans from the National Museum of Scotland. They also developed a new online exhibition platform with input from students on the Collections and Curating Practices MScR and used front-end user feedback to improve navigation.
* **The Hunterian** is progressing with their EMOTIVE project to create usable web and app interfaces for the public, have launched Bloomberg Connects in their public venues (a free app by Bloomberg Philanthropies to help make the cultural organisations more accessible and experience venues and exhibitions remotely), and are developing their new collections interface bringing together The Hunterian’s collections with Archives and Special Collections and allowing users to explore all the University’s collections from new perspectives.
* **The Glasgow School of Art Archives & Collections** launched a new website in May 2022, adding browsable, engaging pathways into the collection, including more interpretation around materials, themes, people, and collection highlights, with introductions to each area authored by guest writers. Overall, this has developed a more engaging, responsive, and publicly appealing service.
* **Museums of the University of St Andrews**, although focussing on a return to in-person delivery access, has also been embedding all the digital advancements made in the previous year in order to create greater reach and deeper impact through blended museum experience. Their Exhibit tool, created in 2020/21 and providing a storytelling approach to presenting and interacting with digitised collections <https://exhibit.so/> remains freely available to be used by other institutions and has been shortlisted for a THE award.
* **University of Stirling Art Collection** used a hybrid outreach and public engagement programme with online talks alongside in person workshops and tours and were able to reach visitors digitally through the creation of video tours of exhibitions, the sculpture collection, forest bathing and a general online introduction to the collection and their work.
* **Heriot-Watt University Museum** produced four online exhibitions during this period, each focusing on a different aspect of the University’s heritage, with a particular focus on Heriot-Watt’s Bicentenary celebrations. With five campuses, including two international ones, online exhibitions allow the heritage team to have a much wider impact.
* **RGU Art & Heritage** developed their ‘Digital Tapestry’ project focusing on community engagement and building in elements of social wellbeing and pioneering work with different audiences. The project is using AR/VR technology and working with intergenerational audiences.
* The **UMIS** website, funded by Museums Galleries Scotland, was launched in November 2021. The new website is aimed at bringing the collections of the UMIS members together in an easily accessible and visually appealing format and in promoting UMIS member events to local communities and the broader public. From its launch to 31 July 2022 the site has seen 1269 users over 1713 sessions, with a very low average bounce rate of 37.5%.

## Decolonisation and repatriation

Activities and programmes within university museums are re-examining and re-telling narratives linked to collections, giving voice to more diverse communities and exploring institutional legacies. UMIS members are acknowledged to be leading practice in this field.

* **Representatives of UMIS** members were this year on the steering group of the ‘Empire, Slavery and Scotland’s Museums’ project sponsored by the Scottish Government. This sector-wide project explored how the story of Scotland’s involvement in transatlantic slavery, empire, and colonialism should be told using museum collections and museum spaces. Recommendations were published in June 2022 and will be taken forward by Museums Galleries Scotland. <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/projects/empire-slavery-scotlands-museums/>
* **The Hunterian’s** ‘Curating Discomfort’ project looked at new ways to explore the interpretation of contested collections and to design and deliver a series of museum interventions that takes the museum out of the institutional comfort zone and embed this work within the museum’s practice. Their new project ‘Power in this Place: Unfinished Conversations’ builds on this work, engaging with communities across the collections and reinforcing anti-racist, participatory approaches, reflection, and debate. <https://bit.ly/CuratingDiscomfort>
* In 2021, the **University of Aberdeen's Museums and Special Collections** developed a repatriation pathway with partners in a Nigeria. This saw the return in October 2021 of a Benin Bronze to the Nigerian National Commission on Museums and Monuments and the Court of the Oba of Benin. The University’s procedure and criteria were first developed in 2002 to enable the return of a sacred bundle to the Kainai First Nation in Canada, with the criteria now being used as a model for museums internationally. <https://bit.ly/UoABenin>
* **Museums of the University of St Andrews** ‘Re-collecting Empire’ project explores present-day entanglements of cultures resulting from colonial encounters in the past, and how creative responses can add new dimensions to heritage objects through examining and re-telling their narratives with a diverse set of audiences. The project is a key part of the University’s strategic objective to tackle institutional legacies and work for a more inclusive and equitable future. <https://bit.ly/recollectingempire>
* The collections of the D’Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum at the University of Dundee were largely acquired during the colonial era. As part of their commitment to inclusion and revealing forgotten aspects of the past, the **University of Dundee Museums** are currently working on a project to decolonise the Museum, researching the stories behind their specimens to find new ways to interpret them. <https://bit.ly/decolonisingdarcythompson>

## Diversifying university entrants

As well as developing activities and programming to widen overall access to and participation in cultural activities, the UMIS members are also focused on Higher Education’s key aim of diversifying those that apply to university, helping achieve Widening Access targets.

* ‘Young Artivists’ – a partnership between the **University of Edinburgh Collections and the University of Stirling Art Collection** - worked with young people (aged 11-18) from across Scotland who are traditionally under-represented at university. It aimed to develop participants’ artistic knowledge and skills and apply them to discuss issues that they care about. The programme included arts event attendance, work experience with arts organisations and events organisation and participants were supported by student mentors. <https://bit.ly/YoungArtivists>
* **The Hunterian, University of Glasgow**, developed relationships with Widening Participation through the *Into University* centres in Govan and Maryhill, providing outreach activity to support their ‘students of the future’ approach.
* **Museums of the University of St Andrews** work closely with the University Widening Access team to contribute content and in-person sessions to the summer schools and First Chances programmes, and through their ‘Moving Art, Connecting Voices’ project have worked closely with Levenmouth Academy and recently arrived migrants and refugees, including children from Afghanistan, focusing on developing English language and collaboration skills.

# **Environmental responsibility**

## Buildings and infrastructure

Although the remit for bettering the sustainability of buildings and infrastructure lies with their host universities, UMIS members are considering sustainability and environment within their operations more broadly. Work undertaken over the past year has included:

* Developing environmental impact checklists
* Establishing sustainability networks and working groups
* Adjusting and adapting their facilities (such as replacing lighting to be more energy efficient)
* The use of electric vehicles

## Exhibitions and projects

Museums have a key role to play in increasing awareness and public knowledge around the environment and environmental issues. In the case of university museums this influence can be both within and outwith their institutions, and often involves academic colleagues, researchers, or external collaborators.

* **Museums of the University of St Andrews’** ‘Dive In! Protecting our Oceans’ exhibition and associated programming explored the ocean and the threats its facing. Held at The Wardlaw Museum, the exhibition prompted visitors to consider how their actions impact what happens in the ocean and looked at how museums can have a positive impact on our environment by encouraging people to make sustainable decisions. The museums worked with a consultant in environmental behaviour change and an evaluation consultant to carefully research what effect visiting the exhibition had on audiences. <https://bit.ly/DiveInWardlaw>
* **The Glasgow School of Art Archives & Collections** team worked with GSA Exhibitions, Central Saint Martins, and the Glasgow Women’s Library on two events looking at ‘Climate Emergency and Creative Action’ and ‘Collecting the Climate Emergency: Process and Practice’ as part of the ‘Close of Play’ series, to complement COP26. They have also explored the concept of ‘digital loans’ considering how augmented reality could be used as an alternative method of borrowing physical objects and have environmental benefits. <https://bit.ly/GSAsustainability>
* **The Hunterian’s** ‘Changing Climate, Changing Stories’ interventions were launched for COP26. Working with researchers from the University’s Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine, the project looked at the museum’s objects from an environmental and sustainability perspective. In addition, they ran events for families, online talks, and social and academic events throughout the year looking at sea science and biodiversity. <https://bit.ly/ChangingClimateStories>
* **University of Stirling Art Collection** supports the University’s Strategic Vision to create ‘Research with Impact’ and has a regular programme of events and public engagement activities which support their academic community to engage with and communicate research which has a positive impact on wider society. The 2022/23 exhibition programme is Space & Place looking at responses to the natural and built environment. <https://bit.ly/SpacePlaceStirling>
* **University of Edinburgh Collections’** ‘Sea Change’ exhibition launched in November 2021 to coincide with the conclusion of the COP26 climate change conference in Glasgow. The exhibition, celebrating the groundbreaking research expedition of HMS Challenger, explores and revisits the intellectual foundation of oceanography. <https://exhibitions.ed.ac.uk/exhibitions/sea-change/>
* In the coming year, **UMIS** is planning on re-visiting and develop its strategic plan in line with the UN sustainability goals.

# **Health and wellbeing**

University museums are well placed to offer their services, programming, and spaces to encourage wellbeing and help with mental health for both students and the broader community.

* **University of Edinburgh Collections** ‘Prescribe Culture’ programme is a sector-leading social prescription programme involving both guided sessions for students referred via Student Services, and self-led participation for broader audiences at a variety of venues both online and offline. The programme now offers programming for those living with dementia and is the foundation of a UKRI funded research project ‘Prescribe Culture Highland’, in collaboration with the University of the Highlands and Islands, exploring the feasibility of scaling up cultural and natural assets for the benefits of public health. <https://bit.ly/UoEPrescribeCulture>
* **University of Stirling Art Collection** has introduced a wellbeing programme in conjunction with Student Support Services. They offer a range of activities for students and the public, either online or in-person, including forest bathing sessions, filmed dance performances, gardening, a ‘happy to chat’ bench and through their sculpture collection which is displayed throughout the campus. <https://bit.ly/UoSWellbeing>
* During Covid, the **Museums of the University of St Andrews** developed online wellbeing resources, designing and badging each of the events with at least one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing – Connect, Learn, Be Active, Take Notice, and Give. By promoting the programmes alongside the Five Ways to Wellbeing, audiences knew how each event could contribute to their wellbeing. Some of the resources have now been developed into an online mindfulness resource booklet and the team have launched a Cultural Prescription offer. <https://bit.ly/UofStAWellbeing>
* **The Hunterian** have this year developed student targeted programming including Hunterian Lates and Wellbeing activities, working in conversation with both the SRC and Student Services, involving a number of student societies and some funding from the Chancellors Fund.
* **University of Dundee Museums’** Museum Engagement team also created various activities and resources to aid student wellbeing. These include a fortnightly series of Museum Mooches (combining walking tours with creative activities) and two Art Spaces in the Dalhousie Building, where students or staff can have a seat and view one of their paintings while listening to a tailored mindfulness exercise designed specifically around the artwork.

# **Collaboration and advocacy**

As well as working together as an effective and productive partnership, UMIS members regularly share knowledge more broadly within the cultural sector and other stakeholders, strengthening cultural industry nationally and raising our profile globally.

## Profile raising and sector representation

* UMIS continues to act as a **key representative body** within the cultural sector, acting as conduit to ensure the position of university museums and their host institutions are understood and considered in key cultural decisions, and working with the Scottish Government, Museums Galleries Scotland, the Museums Association, and other stakeholders to influence policy and advocate on behalf of the sector.
* UMIS **works extensively with UK and international colleagues** through the University Museums Group (UK), Universeum (Europe) and ICOM-UMAC (International). UMIS members regularly provide loans of collections and objects to UK and international museums and galleries and facilitate and participate in international collaborations and on discrete projects with international colleagues.
* UMIS and its members have continued to influence and feed in to the direction of the new Museums Galleries Scotland **strategy for Scotland’s museums**. The UMIS Coordinator was featured in a piece published in trade magazine Museums Journal commenting on the strategy development.

## Scottish Government liaison

* Following the submission of a response to the **pre-Budget scrutiny report** from the Scottish Government’s department for Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture (CEEAC), UMIS’s comments were cited in the resulting publication in November 2021. UMIS is also planning to submit a response to the 2022/23 pre-budget scrutiny.
* As important cultural institutions with a clear international remit and ongoing international partnerships, UMIS secured a meeting with the **Cultural Diplomacy** lead for the Scottish Government to input into their thinking about the development of a Cultural Diplomacy Strategy
* Throughout the academic year, UMIS **prepared briefings** to be shared with the Scottish Government initially through Museums Galleries Scotland, but latterly directly with the office of the Minister for Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture. We also provided information through the Culture Minister’s office at the request of the Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training.
* In April 2021, shortly after the appointment of Mr Neil Gray as the Minister for Culture – replacing Ms Jenny Gilruth – UMIS secured a **Ministerial visit** to one of our member museums. Initially organised for the Wardlaw Museum, St Andrews, the visit was changed to St Cecilia’s Hall: Concert Room and Music Museum to accommodate the Minister’s changing diary.
* **UMIS** will have a presence at the Museums Association conference advocacy event at the National Museum of Scotland in November this year.

## Advice, support, and partnerships

UMIS members are well placed to provide advice and support to broader organisations with collections – be those tertiary education providers or other organisations – and work collegiately with the entirety of the museums sector and other partners.

* UMIS members act as Accreditation Museum Mentors for other museums seeking Accreditation and offer mentoring and support of museum colleagues in other institutions through the Museums Association’s AMA and FMA schemes.
* Over recent months UMIS has been in discussion with the **Royal Conservatoire**, providing advice and support on embarking on the process of Accreditation from the unique perspective of a tertiary education collection, and are committed to working with MGS to provide similar support in future for any colleges or other universities wishing to explore Accreditation.
* In addition, the UMIS Coordinator and other UMIS members have provided advice and support to **Edinburgh Napier University** around developing their collections and collections practices.
* **University of Edinburgh Collections** partnered with Edinburgh Napier’s School of Business in 2021, with Napier taking the role of evaluation partner for the University’s Dementia Socials programming. More recently the UoE Museums Civic Engagement Manager acts as an external consultant for heritage and health/wellbeing for Napier’s Tourism Research Centre.
* **University of Aberdeen Museums and Special Collections** act as curatorial adviser to Robert Gordon University collections, the Seven Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen, and the Garioch Heritage Centre.
* **UMIS** has established a model for an annual conference for the sector. With the help of cross-sectoral organisations and practitioners, the conferences share insight, best practice and practical examples of programming centred around a key theme. In 2021 this conference had an international reach and focused on the role of culture, heritage and creativity in health and wellbeing. In early 2023 the theme will be equity, diversity, and inclusion.
* As mentioned, university museums’ practice around **decolonisation, repatriation and restitution** is sector leading. UMIS members were on the steering group of the Scottish Government’s Empire, Slavery and Scotland’s Museums project, were part of the Museum Association’s Decolonisation Guidance Working Group and contributed to the international ICOM-UMAC Guidance for Restitution and Return of Items from University Museums and Collections.
* UMIS members have positions on the **ethics committees** for both the Museums Association (UK) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM).
* University museums work regionally and locally with partners through Place Partnerships, regional cultural partnerships, regional museums forums, regional tourism partnerships and through specific projects, programmes and festivals.
* UMIS members have leading roles in the Scottish Universities Public Art Network, the Scotland and Medicine Group and regional museum forums throughout Scotland

**For further information on any of UMIS and our members’ activities, please contact:**

**Sarah Burry-Hayes, UMIS Coordinator**

**Sarah.burry-hayes@glasgow.ac.uk**