

UMIS

University Museums
in Scotland

UMIS Strategic Plan

2023 - 2024

UMIS strategic plan

Introduction

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.

We offer support to our members and to other university museums, working together and with organisations within and outside the sector. We promote, highlight and advocate for the value of university museums within our institutions and to a range of audiences including students, researchers, schools, and the public.

University museums play an increasingly important role in Scottish cultural life, offering exhibitions, activities, and resources for everyone.

Our members:

[Glasgow School of Art](#)

Venues: *GSA Reading Room (The Whisky Bond), The Mackintosh Building (closed)*

[Heriot Watt University](#)

Venue: *Heriot Watt Museum*

[Robert Gordon University](#)

Venues *around campus*

[University of Aberdeen](#)

Venues: *Kings Museum (closed), Zoology Museum, The Gallery in Sir Duncan Rice Library*

[University of Dundee](#)

Venues: *Tower Foyer Gallery, Lamb Gallery, D'Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum, Tayside Medical History Museum, and other displays across campus*

[University of Edinburgh](#)

Venues: *Anatomical Museum, Centre for Research Collections, Cockburn Geology Museum, Natural History Collection, Talbot Rice Gallery, St Cecilia's Hall: Concert Room and Music Museum*

[University of Glasgow](#)

Venues: Hunterian Museum, Hunterian Art Gallery, Mackintosh House, Hunterian Zoology Museum, Anatomy Museum, Country Surgeon Micro Museum, The Hunterian at Kelvin Hall, The Hunterian in the South

[University of St Andrews](#)

Venues: Wardlaw Museum (opening delayed), Bell Pettigrew Museum of Natural History, Museum Collections Centre, and other venues across campus

[University of Stirling](#)

Venue: Primarily in the Pathfoot Building, with sculptures displayed around campus

Five of our members are holders of [Collections Recognised as Nationally Significant to Scotland](#):

Glasgow School of Art

The Charles Rennie Mackintosh Collection

University of Aberdeen

Entire collection

University of Edinburgh

Historical Musical Instruments Collection

University of Glasgow (Hunterian)

Entire Collection

University of St Andrews

The Chemistry, Historic Scientific Instruments and Heritage Collections

Purpose

To connect Scotland's Accredited university museums to work collaboratively and effectively, offering mutual support and enabling us to maximise our contribution to Scotland's universities, culture, people, and economy.

Mission statement

UMIS acts as the collective voice of Scotland's university museums. We work to raise the impact, profile and visibility of Scottish university museums and the local, regional, and national collections we collectively care for, highlighting their value and vital position within our institutions and the wider cultural landscape. We create opportunities locally, nationally, and internationally for university colleagues, students, researchers, schools, and the public to investigate and enjoy the collections we hold and for our members to offer each other mutual support.

Vision

That Scotland's university museums will be recognised as a significant intrinsic component of higher education in Scotland and make meaningful contributions to Scottish life and culture. The value of our collections and the knowledge we hold will be recognised as fundamental to learning, teaching, and research worldwide. Our collections will be accessible to everyone – both physically and digitally - and act as inspiration and catalysts for research, discussion, and debate. Our museum spaces and programming will be inclusive and open, encouraging and representing the full diversity of visitors and audiences.

We will be trusted, supportive, progressive, challenging, dynamic and sustainable organisations, helping to break down barriers, educate and lead contemporary thought and cultural practice.

Strategic objectives

For mapped aims/recommendations - see Appendix

	SFC recommendations	MGS strategic aims	Scottish Government National Outcomes	Universities' strategic aims	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
1. To be the collective voice of the university museums in Scotland: advocating with appropriate audiences, bodies and organisations	1, 7	1a, 2a, 2c, 3c	2, 5, 8, 9	7, 8, 10	17
2. To act in partnership: strengthening links with organisations and other university museum bodies regionally, nationally and internationally, and sharing knowledge, resources and expertise within UMIS and with the broader museums sector	1, 6, 7	1d, 2c, 3c	2, 5, 8, 9	6, 7, 8, 10	17
3. To maximise use of our collections: to provide and promote opportunities for the broader research community to access and use them, provide high quality learning and teaching experiences and explore new ways to engage academic audiences with collections	2, 3, 5	1c, 2c, 3c	2, 5, 6, 8, 9	1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10	4, 16
4. To strive for the highest collection standards: in preservation, care and interpretation of collections, and maintaining Accreditation standards throughout the UMIS membership and Recognition standards with the Recognised Collections	2	2c, 3c	2, 5, 9, 11	7, 8, 9, 10	11, 16

<p>5. To take a coordinated approach to transforming activity and audiences: engaging the full diversity of visitors, schools and other groups – both directly and through outreach - and forging stronger links with academic colleagues, university departments and students</p>	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1a, 1c, 1d, 2c, 3b, 3c	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17
<p>6. To be sustainable, forward-thinking organisations: to explore environmental agendas, ensure adherence to best practice in our operations, exploit digital technology and be inclusive, supportive, representative and progressive in our operations</p>	1, 2, 4	2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c	1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11	3, 5, 8, 9, 10	5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17

Strategic priorities

	SFC recommendations	MGS strategic aims	Scottish Government National Outcomes	Universities' strategic aims	UN Sustainable Development Goals
<p>Corporate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and involve a highly engaged committee Collaborate to establish effective best-practice governance and policy Ensure effective and collective representation Develop clear mechanisms to evaluate and communicate the value and impact of work Assist and provide support for members with fewer resources across operations and activities 	<p>1</p> <p>1, 2</p> <p>1, 2, 3, 4, 6</p> <p>1, 2, 4</p> <p>1, 2</p>	<p>3c</p> <p>2a, 2c, 3c</p> <p>2a, 2c, 3c</p> <p>2a, 2c</p> <p>2c, 3c</p>	<p>2, 5</p> <p>2, 5, 8</p> <p>2, 5</p> <p>2, 5, 8</p> <p>2, 5, 8</p>	<p>8, 10</p> <p>8, 10</p> <p>7, 8, 10</p> <p>7, 8, 9, 10</p> <p>8</p>	<p>16, 17</p> <p>16, 17</p> <p>16, 17</p> <p>16</p> <p>16, 17</p>
<p>Collections, engagement, research and teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore innovative and effective ways to embed collections in teaching and research Share knowledge, expertise and skills around collections, teaching and research 	<p>2, 3, 4, 7</p> <p>1, 2, 3</p>	<p>1c, 2c</p> <p>2c, 3c</p>	<p>2, 5, 6, 8, 9</p> <p>2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9</p>	<p>1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9</p> <p>1, 4, 7, 8, 10</p>	<p>4, 11, 16, 17</p> <p>4, 8, 11, 16, 17</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a distributed national collection stewarded by university museums 	1, 6, 7	2c	2, 5	8, 9	9, 11, 16, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate on collections programming and other collections-related and engagement activity 	1, 3, 4, 6, 7	2c	2, 5, 6, 8, 11	2, 6, 7, 8, 10	4, 10, 11, 16, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support each other in relation to maintaining/achieving the Accreditation and Recognition standards 	1, 6	2c, 3c	2, 5, 9	8, 10	11, 16, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with other university departments on research and teaching activity 	1, 2, 3, 4	1c, 2c	2, 5, 6, 8, 9	1, 2, 4, 8, 10	4, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use collections to engage under-represented groups with universities and heritage 	4, 5, 6, 7	1a, 2c, 3a, 3b	1, 2, 6, 10, 11	2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10	4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage schools and young people, introducing them to our collections and universities through the Curriculum for Excellence and other learning frameworks 	2, 4, 6	1c	2, 4, 6, 7, 11	1, 6, 8, 9, 10	4, 10, 11, 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with our communities locally to enhance the role of civic universities and the place agenda 	2, 6	1d, 2c	1, 2, 4, 11	2, 6, 8, 10	8, 9, 11, 16, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with broader communities locally, nationally and internationally 	6, 7	1a, 1c, 2c, 3b	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11	6, 7, 8, 9, 10	5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17
Operational					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and work on joint projects and programming 	1, 4, 6, 7	2c	2, 5, 8	8, 9, 10	16, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support knowledge and skills exchange throughout member organisations and the education and heritage sectors 	1, 2, 3	2c, 3c	2, 5, 6, 11	1, 8, 10	4, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share good practice and support improvement within member organisations 	1, 4, 7	2a, 2c, 3c	2, 5, 8	8, 10	9, 11, 16, 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and communicate work collectively and share market intelligence 	2, 3, 4, 6, 7	1a, 2c, 3c	2, 5, 8	2, 6, 7, 8, 10	9, 16, 17

APPENDIX

Key stakeholder objectives

Scottish Funding Council recommendations

1. Greater leadership from UMIS – enhancing our advocacy role and developing a strategic vision
2. Enhanced profile within their own institution – ensuring strategies match institutions and demonstrating good governance
3. Stronger links with academic colleagues – particularly researchers and students
4. Better exploitation of digital technology – use and embed
5. Stronger links with their institution’s widening access teams
6. Greater public engagement – including external stakeholders and other regional museums
7. Strengthen international links

MGS strategic aims

1. Connection
 - a. Inclusion
 - b. Health & wellbeing
 - c. Education
 - d. Place
2. Resilience
 - a. Financial resilience
 - b. Climate action
 - c. Collaboration
3. Workforce
 - a. Fair work
 - b. Diversity
 - c. Skills and confidence

Scottish Government National Outcomes

1. Human Rights
2. Culture

3. Environment
4. Health
5. Fair Work & Business
6. Education
7. Children
8. Economy
9. International
10. Poverty
11. Communities

Universities' strategic aims

Note: although all the universities have different strategies, the key main priorities and drivers/enablers from each have been grouped under the following headings

1. Excellence in teaching/learning (inc. employability)
2. Student experience/support
3. Sustainability (environmental & financial)
4. Research and innovation
5. Equality and diversity (inc. widening participation)
6. Civic engagement and social responsibility
7. International/internationalisation and global partnerships
8. Collaboration/partnership
9. Use of digital and emerging technologies
10. High quality organisations (inc. campus & operations)

UN Sustainable Development Goals

1. No poverty (eradicate extreme poverty, reduce those in poverty of any kind)
2. Zero hunger (ensure access by all people to safe & nutritious food, agricultural research, biodiversity of food)

3. Good health & wellbeing (mental & physical health, reduce substance abuse, healthcare)
4. Quality education (pre-school to university, mental health of students, gender parity, access for all, educate around EDI and inclusion)
5. Gender equality (end violence & discrimination, equal leadership, empowerment & equal representation & rights)
6. Clean water & sanitation (water efficiency, water quality, loss of wetlands – retain ecosystems)
7. Affordable & clean energy (access to electricity, renewables, research)
8. Decent work with economic growth (unemployment, child labour, technology & innovation, equality & rights, youth employment, sustainable tourism)
9. Industry, innovation & infrastructure (industry, sustainability, scientific research, access to information & communications including internet)
10. Reduced inequalities (inclusion of all, mobility of people & freedom of migration)
11. Sustainable cities & communities (safe & affordable housing & transport, protect cultural & natural heritage, green public spaces, air quality)
12. Responsible consumption & production (natural resources, reduce waste generation, increase awareness, local culture & products, sustainable tourism)
13. Climate action (improve education, planning, resilience & adaptive capacity)
14. Life below water (marine pollution, end overfishing, conserve coastal & marine areas, increase scientific knowledge)
15. Life on land (sustainable land use, forests/deforestation, halt loss of biodiversity, end poaching & trafficking)
16. Peace, justice & strong institutions (reduce violence, abuse & trafficking, equal access to justice, effective accountable & transparent institutions, representative decision making, strengthen relevant national institutions, sustainable development)
17. Partnerships for the goals (finance – focus on developing countries, technology – knowledge sharing, capacity building, trade, global stability, multi-stakeholder partnerships – public, private public & civil society partnerships, develop measures for progress of goals)