

Museums and galleries eligible for the VAT refund scheme

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This short guidance note provides detail on the broadening of the VAT refund scheme for museums and galleries, which came into force on 16 March 2016.

Under the normal VAT rules, VAT on costs relating to non-business activities, such as providing free rights of admission, cannot be recovered. However, this new scheme allows certain museums and galleries to claim back VAT incurred on most goods and services purchased in order to grant free rights of admission to their collections.

To be considered for the scheme, museums and galleries must request an application form from the relevant body and submit the completed application to that body. These include:

- ▶ Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- ▶ Welsh Assembly Government
- ▶ Northern Ireland Assembly
- ▶ Scottish Government
- ▶ Ministry of Defence

The completion of an application does not guarantee admission to the scheme and the decision to include a museum or gallery is ultimately made by Government Ministers.

From 16 March 2016 the eligibility criteria for the scheme has been broadened with applications welcomed from any museums and galleries who meet the basic criteria as set out below. They must:

- ▶ Be open to the general public for at least 30 hours per week, without exception
- ▶ Offer free entry, without prior appointment
- ▶ Hold collections in a purpose-built building
- ▶ Display details of free entry and opening hours on the museum website



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Museums and galleries will also be required to complete a strategic business case as part of the application process, including:

- ▶ Proof of Arts Council England Accredited status (or equivalent)
- ▶ Past and/or projected visitor figures
- ▶ Information on existing and planned education programmes and community engagement work

Upon admission to the scheme museums or galleries will be required to provide:

- ▶ Evidence confirming an obligation to providing or continuing to provide free entry
- ▶ Visitor figures on a bi-annual basis

We can help you with the application process, so please get in touch with [Alex Millar](#) or [Laura Masheder](#):



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