

Access Policy and Framework

	Who	Date
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Approved by ULT	University Council courtesy Deputy Chair, Merlyn Lowther	24 April 2026
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Next review due:	Annual interim review (Jan 2027) then full review (Jan 2030)	

What is the difference between a policy, procedure and plan? (Collections Trust, 2025)

- Policy** – sets out the principles and rules for guiding decisions and achieving desired outcomes or delivering the mission and strategic aims of an organisation. Policy describes the overall intentions and direction of an organisation as formally expressed by top management or the governing body. A policy should be written in broad enough terms to last for several years. (WHAT AND WHY)
- Procedure** – instructions for how something should be done, developed as working documents at an operational level. Although they may be referred to, they should not be included within a policy. (HOW)
- Plan** – outlines priorities for improvement, for example an inventory project plan. A plan sets out objectives, actions, resources, milestones, and measurable results. (WHO, WHEN, WHERE)

Purpose:

The University of Salford Art Collection Access policy, procedure and plans (part of the Collections Management Framework) describe a commitment to:

- Make our services (e.g. buildings, events, information, collections) available to a broad range of visitors
- Address and overcome potential access barriers which may prevent visitors from engaging with or fully enjoying our collections and programmes
- Ensure inclusive and equitable access for our colleagues, including freelancers and collaborators, as well as our audiences
- Work in an appropriate and scalable way according to available resources and capacity
- Support the University's strategic mission and EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) Ambition
- Act in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Act

Context:

The University's [2025-2030 Institutional Strategy](#) mission is: *Innovating to Enrich Lives: Building towards social justice to create a more just and equitable society. The three underlying principles are: A collective and unrelenting drive for high impact outcomes, championing opportunity and inclusion for all, and building an inclusive and healthy university community where everyone knows they matter.*

The University's [EDI Ambition for 2023-2028](#) is: *To be a university where inclusivity is deliberately designed and embedded into all that we do, where every student and colleague feels like they matter and belong. Our culture and institutional values will support an inspirational learning and working environment, which empowers people to lead with creativity and innovation that advances equity for all. We will be a university that dismantles those institutional structures and systems that lead to discrimination, removing barriers that stand in the way of achievement, and building our strengths in advancing equity.*

Scope:

This policy covers core provision on campus, for example at our gallery and study room, and online on our websites. Where working with external partners off-site, we will collaborate closely to ensure our work retains best possible practices in accordance with both organisations access policies and plans. Where external funding is secured, additional specific access measures may be planned for, further to this policy/plan (e.g. participant travel).

Terms:

In the context of this policy, *access* means the opportunity to engage with our buildings, collections, programmes, content and expertise.

Policy Statement:

The Collection believes in the principle that all people and sectors of the community have a fundamental right to engage with, use and enjoy our collections and services. We support the '**social model of disability**' which recognises that barriers, attitudes and systems in society can exclude people with disabilities from full and fair participation in everyday life.

We are committed to maximising access for everyone, whether student, colleague, artist, freelancer, collaborator, researcher, participant or visitor; this may include addressing and reducing barriers around physical, sensory, intellectual, language, cultural, financial, geographical, digital, and attitudinal access. As a small team we will work proactively within our available capacity and resources, collaborating with internal and external partners, and reviewing and prioritising actions annually in our Access Plan.

The following framework outlines how we enact our principle.

Access Framework:**a) Overview – our commitment to access**

Our **campus gallery** (the New Adelphi Exhibition Gallery) is open free of charge, Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm (except for bank holidays, winter closure and changeover periods). It may also be open on evenings or weekends for special events which are advertised in advance. Information about opening times, travel and access are available on the Collection website.

Our gallery provides at least two exhibitions per year focussed on works from the collection. An associated programme includes e.g. tours, talks, workshop as well as student engagement e.g. through live briefs. The gallery is modest but offers good physical access (well lit, ground floor).

In addition, works can be viewed at other **key locations on campus** e.g. Albert Adams Room (by appointment) Clifford Whitworth Library (during opening hours; or by appointment). Both also offer good access and information about these locations is also provided on our website.

The Collection is stored in a dedicated facility on campus in Maxwell Building lower ground floor; designed and moved into during 2020 to improve collections care and access. The **Study Room** is spacious, comfortable and well-lit, with level access available. Only the archive room has stepped access, with a single step, however materials are generally brought out by staff for study. The Study Room is only accessible by appointment; clear guidelines are given on our website.

Throughout the year, we regularly programme exhibitions with our **partner organisations and venues**. These events will be clearly promoted, and we will work with those organisations to ensure good accessibility is upheld.

Online, **our dedicated catalogue website** currently includes around 30% of the collection, with a representative sample across modern and contemporary work, mediums and collecting strands. Additionally, around 10% of the collection is available on the Art UK platform. Works are digitised and uploaded on an ongoing basis, according to our Documentation Plan. Entries are supplemented by information, blogs, articles on **our collection website**, as well as **social media content**.

Finally, our **events and exhibitions programme**, which may include physical, digital and/or hybrid events, aims to fulfil a range of users, offering e.g. different types and durations of events. Our Access Policy should be read with our Access Plan and Engagement Plan.

b) Identifying User needs

The Collection takes a number of steps to identify user needs on an ongoing basis, including:

- **Access audits:**

University buildings are regularly audited and inspected by the Estates team, who lead on facility management and development. Public guides for all buildings are published on the AccessAble website and linked from the Collection website. An additional **Access Audit** for the Collection was also undertaken on 20 January 2026 and will be reviewed annually.

ACCESS FRAMEWORK 2025

- **Visitor responses:** Visitor responses are collected via our annual visitor survey, exhibition comments cards, and on social media. Ticketed events also collect queries at booking stage and feedback afterwards. Externally funded programmes undertake additional evaluation measures. Immediate issues are raised in weekly team meetings for action; others contribute to Access and Engagement planning.
- **Audience development planning:** The Collection worked with a freelance audience development specialist in 2023-2024 to develop a new plan, including assessing current audiences, audience gaps and their potential needs. This included analysis of our student body and visiting audiences.
- **Active participation in the University's Colleague Networks:** The *Access Network* includes colleagues with a variety of lived experience and access barriers, and is involved in events, consultations, peer support etc. Our current Curator is a committee member and co-lead since 2024; additionally, a member of *Salford Proud* staff LGBTQ+ network (since 2025) and the department *EDI Working Group* (since 2026) which are also involved in consultation & action.
- **Active participation in the sector:** e.g. **Salford Culture and Place Partnership**, which broadens our knowledge of audiences and access in the region, including commissioned research from the Audience Agency and Salford City Council; and guidance from e.g. Arts Council.
- **Regular training:** All staff undertake mandatory training including Diversity in HE and Inclusive, Cohesive HE Campus modules. Staff are encouraged to explore additional EDI training as part of annual PDRs and can access this through e.g. the Business Disability Forum or other specialists.
- **Situation response:** For example informally surveying audiences and collaborators during the Covid-19 pandemic to understand changing needs.
- **Close collaboration:** The Collection works closely with colleagues, artists, participants and partner organisations, and works responsively to understand needs. This may include working with specialist organisations (e.g. Salford youth service); supporting Access Riders for artists; and sharing best practice. We also contribute regularly to teaching and learning so keep abreast of access issues and approaches raised by students/tutors.

c) Providing information to users

We recognise that giving good clear information helps users make decisions about how they might engage, or how they might feed back to us about potential barriers. This Access policy is made available on our website.

Wherever possible we make access information clear in advance to reduce the burden for users to make additional enquiries. This includes e.g. providing links to building access guides on our websites (via AccessAble), including details on our booking pages (e.g. event duration, facilities available). We also provide information in our gallery (e.g. QR link to digital versions of handouts, large-format versions etc). We provide clear contact details for queries. For anything not currently provided as standard (e.g. BSL interpretation) we will collect feedback and explore trialling these as an improvement in our Access Plan.

d) Planning and Risk assessment

Our events and exhibitions planning and Risk Assessments account for potential physical and sensory issues (e.g. physical access, use of lights) as well as thematic issues (e.g. triggering topics) and aims to remove or reduce these. Where not possible (e.g. in artwork content) we ensure good trigger warnings and information provision.

e) Resources and access

The access plan will be carried out within the limit of available resources, aiming to strike a balance between long-term preservation of collections and accessibility of objects for public display, research, and enjoyment. This will be achieved through careful management of risk and opportunity.

f) Continuous improvement

A workforce that is genuinely informed and engaged in EDI and Access is essential for maintaining this policy and providing good experiences. Inductions for new staff include mandatory training, renewed yearly. The annual PDR process also encourages further independent training. The Collection will keep abreast of latest developments in the sector and seek specialist advice where required.

g) Environmental Sustainability

The University is committed to best environmental practices wherever possible in all aspects of our work. A balance must be maintained between sustainability and access;

ACCESS FRAMEWORK 2025

this may include e.g. simple measures such as monitoring use of printed and digital materials; and advertising public transport options.

h) Providing access

The Collection acknowledges that access experiences can be individual, intersectional, and multi-faceted; including barriers around physical, sensory, intellectual, language, cultural, financial, geographical, digital, and attitudinal access:

***i) Physical:** Those with physical disabilities, including limited mobility, use of a wheelchair, or fatigue or other chronic conditions may have limited access to our physical or online spaces. This may also include visitors with caring responsibilities, young children, or of varying ages etc.*

***ii) Sensory:** People with hearing or visual impairments, or other sensory conditions may also encounter difficulties accessing our physical or online content and programmes.*

For physical and sensory barriers, we will:

- Work with Estates to ensure physical spaces meet appropriate and legal standards
- Work with DIT to ensure online spaces meet appropriate best standards (e.g. WCAG W3)
- Commit to programming in level-access spaces, and where not possible provide quality alternative access/engagement
- Use our Access Plan and Access Checklist when planning and promoting our programmes (including e.g. signposting to facilities, transport, toilets, seating)
- Provide good levels of information before and during gallery visits (e.g. trigger warnings)
- Provide alternative formats (such as large print; also subtitles/transcripts for audio)
- Incorporate improvements into our Access Plan (e.g. trialling alternative sensory options)
- Provide and improve good wayfinding

***iii) Intellectual:** Some people may find our approaches too specialist or academic, some may have learning disabilities or a range of different learning styles, which affect their ability to engage and absorb information.*

- We will use clear, consistent, and concise language, design, fonts and formatting, across our communications, content and interpretation

ACCESS FRAMEWORK 2025

- We will incorporate and seek to improve our range of types of activity in our access and engagement plan
- We will seek specialist partners where specific support or expertise is required
- **iv) Cultural:** *Some people may feel that the gallery, collection and programme are not relevant to them, or do not reflect or embrace their identity, background, culture or interests.*

v) Language: *Some visitors may not read or speak English.*

- We will keep up to date with internal and external training, for example mandatory training and our EDI programmes, to improve our understanding and cultural offer to wider audiences. As part of our Audience Development Plan, we will seek to better understand our current and potential users.
- We will assess the need for multilingual interpretation for our project audiences where appropriate (*For example, with our strand of Chinese Contemporary Art*). We will also provide digital formats for auto-translation.
- In line with our institutional strategy focussed on social justice and inclusion, we will seek to work with a range of artists, collaborators and participants with a variety of lived experience. We will remain responsive to issues that may arise e.g. around culturally sensitive topics (e.g. using trigger warnings; awareness of religious dates).
- At our next Collections Development review, we will seek to better understand and improve the gaps in our collection/programme/approaches (as well as gaps nationally) for instance in terms of protected characteristics.

vi) Financial: *Some people may not be able to afford to visit to the gallery or take part in the programme, for example due to travel costs*

- We endeavour to provide our events, exhibitions and engagement programmes for free wherever possible. Where it is suitable to charge, we will aim to set affordable rates, and/or sliding scales, and/or subsidised places, including free places for carers.

vii) Geographical: *Some people will live too far away to visit, or face difficulty in terms of limited transport infrastructure.*

- We will ensure good online content is kept up to date, including images and content.

ACCESS FRAMEWORK 2025

- For funded projects, we will seek to support transport costs for communities involved.
- We will work in collaboration and partnerships with other venues; and make items available for loan regionally, nationally and internationally.

viii) Digital: *Some people may not have access to the internet or a smartphone, or may have a digital skills gap.*

- We will avoid ‘digital only’ content (such as gallery labels only accessible by QR code) and/or, where digital access is required, we will seek to provide or loan equipment with instructions (e.g. *provision of cameras to local youth groups*).

ix) Attitudinal: *Some people may have a lack of awareness of the gallery, collection, programme and our themes or subjects. There may be perception issues about who the University is ‘for’.*

- We will ensure our promotional and marketing materials are diverse, and present the gallery and collections as welcoming and inclusive, including for people who are not regular arts audiences
- Our staff will make sure visitors feel welcome on arrival and during events
- We will endeavour to programme activity that addresses these issues, for example increasing co-production and collaboration, and/or targeting currently low-engaged groups
- We will continue to work across disciplines and with varied partners, for example our programmes which connect art, nature, science, environment, wellbeing etc, which provide a new entry point for audiences

Responsibilities:

The University Art Collection team lead on all collection related activity, however as part of a large organisation we rely on the following colleagues:

- **The University Estates team** are responsible for ensuring that buildings meet minimum legal standards for accessibility. Building design, construction and maintenance is managed by the Estates team and follows government Building Standards for legal minimum accessibility. All buildings housing collection displays have been audited with the information available on AccessAble. New builds have included staff surveys and consultations, including with the staff Access Network.
- **The EDI team** are responsible for leading strategy and training for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion across the organisation

ACCESS FRAMEWORK 2025

- **Line Managers** are responsible for ensuring all staff, including interns, undertake minimum mandatory relevant training modules, and remain vigilant of user needs
- **All colleagues** involved in developing or maintaining spaces, collections and programmes are responsible for making them as accessible as possible and creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. This may include partners, self-employed collaborators and interns.

Any concerns regarding Care and Conservation should be reported to the Curator in the first instance: Stephanie Fletcher, Curator, Art Collection, s.fletcher@salford.ac.uk

Additional References, Links and Resources:

Museums Development North 2022	Access Policies and Plans Training , 10 th Nov
Shape Arts	Shape Arts Resources for best practice
Ekarv Method	South East Museums Writing Texts guidance
Museums Association	Code of Ethics 2025
University of Salford	Institutional Strategy 2025 - 2030
University of Salford	EDI Ambition 2023-2028
Gov.UK	Equality Act 2010
Staff Mandatory Training	Diversity in HE; Inclusive, Cohesive HE Campus
Colleague Network	Access Salford Colleague Network