

AIM Pilgrim Trust Collection Care Audit (2023-2025) Applicant Guidance Notes

Who can apply for an AIM Pilgrim Trust Collection Care Audit?

The audit grant is designed to enable small museums to fund a professional collections care audit led by an accredited conservator. The audit grant enables small museum members to understand the steps they need to take to improve collections care and can help inform those who are on their journey to becoming an accredited museum.

Eligibility Criteria

- Be an AIM member.
- Be a UK registered charity or,
- An organisation with exempt charitable status or,
- A recognised public body i.e. Local Authority Museum
- Be a small or medium museum.
- Have fewer than 50,000 visitors p.a.

How much funding can eligible museums apply for?

Successful applicants are awarded £1,200, plus travel expenses and VAT, if necessary, to cover the conservator's costs.

When is the grant paid?

Grants are paid retrospectively to the museum following completion of the audit. Museums will need to pay the conservators invoice and submit a claim form and supporting documents for reimbursement.

What does a basic audit pay for?

The grant pays for an accredited conservator to work with you for three days to complete the audit and produce a written report. The report will prioritise the actions both in relation to how urgent they are, how effective they are in moving the collections towards a stable condition or towards being able to be accessed and used, and how easy they are to achieve.

Example Schedule.

Day 1: Review of documentation and interviews with staff.

Day 2: Visit the museum to undertake the audit.

Day 3: Produce a short, written report, which highlights and prioritises the key actions which the museum should work towards, to improve the care of its collections.

Do I need to find a Conservator to conduct the audit?

No, it isn't necessary to name a conservator when making your application, as AIM staff will match you to an accredited conservator when awarding the grant. AIM work with the Institute of Conservation, (ICON), to develop a list of accredited conservators with the right expertise to be able to support our members. The list can be found online at the bottom of the Pilgrim Trust Collections Care and Conservation grant page. Audit applicants are welcome to look at the list and name a preferred conservator on their application, but we cannot guarantee your selection.

What will a conservator led audit offer my museum?

An audit will provide your museum with access to the expertise of an accredited conservator who will produce a report making recommendations on future collections care needs. The recommendations can be used to support an application for further funding from the AIM Pilgrim Trust Collections Care Grant scheme or an alternative grant. The audit provides the opportunity to learn about your museum and how to care for its collection/s more effectively and efficiently in the long-term.

Application Support

The AIM programmes team are happy to advise on applications and encourage applicants to discuss projects with us before applying for grants via email or during a 1-2-1 session. Contact the AIM Grants Administrator Fiona Woolley on programmes@aim-museums.co.uk if you would like to discuss an application or access additional support.

You may find it helpful to talk to your local Museums Development Officer (MDO). The contact details for your regional office can be found here <https://mduk.org.uk/>. They have considerable experience with grant applications and may be able to help with finding a suitable conservator or suggest how you might strengthen your application.

Application Process

- 1) The AIM Grants Administrator will acknowledge receipt of applications, check that the project is eligible and may contact you to discuss if any additional data is needed.
- 2) Applications will be considered by a committee of 4-6 AIM Trustees and independent experts.
- 3) In the case of two applications assessed to be of similar strength, priority will be given to museums that have not previously had a grant from the AIM Pilgrim Trust schemes.
- 4) Applicants will be informed of the outcome approximately four to six weeks after the closing date of the grant round.
- 5) Unsuccessful applicants will be given reasons for the bid failure and an indication as to whether they can resubmit the same bid for any subsequent round.
- 6) Successful applicants will receive an email with a letter attached detailing the conservator and the audit process.
- 7) The applicant will need to directly engage with the conservator; initially with a discussion by telephone to agree the scope of works, discuss any requirements or timings for the interviews and the museum visit.
- 8) The applicant will agree the final brief, cost of travel, accommodation, and VAT (if applicable) with the conservator and provide any documentation or previous reports to the chosen conservator for review.
- 9) The applicant will notify AIM of additional costs of travel, accommodation, and VAT (if required) using the form attached to the grant award letter.
- 10) After the conservators visit, the report will be provided to the museum with the appropriate findings and recommendations.
- 11) The applicant is responsible for paying the conservators invoice following the completion of the audit.
- 12) To claim the grant the applicant organisation will need to submit the claim form, images and a copy of the conservator's report and invoice.

Grant Scoring Criteria

Applications will be scored against the following criteria:

- 1) **Collection Significance.** Tell us why the collections are important to your museum and your area.
- 2) **Urgency.** What is the problem you are seeking to address? Why is it a priority to undertake an audit now?
- 3) **Condition.** Tell us about the current state of your collections. How do you look after your collection and what collections care issues are you already aware of.
- 4) **Improve.** How will the collection be preserved, maintained, and enhanced in the future?
- 5) **Impact.** What will the long-term impact of the conservator led audit be on your organisation?

How do I apply?

Applications in PDF format should be emailed to Fiona Woolley the AIM Grants Administrator. Please remember to include images of the stores and exhibition areas to be audited and submit to programmes@aim-museums.co.uk.

Application Deadlines (2023-2025)

The grant deadlines will be 5pm on the last Friday in March for the Spring round and 5pm on the last Friday in September for the Autumn round.