

**NMS LOANS POLICY
REQUESTS RECEIVED DURING THE PERIOD OF THE ROYAL MUSEUM
PROJECT**

1. Introduction

NMS is about to embark one of the biggest projects in its history. It is planning the redevelopment of the Royal Museum, its original building in Chambers Street, Edinburgh.

It hopes, with the support of government, lottery and private funding, to re-invent the Royal Museum with new displays and all the visitor and education facilities necessary for a twenty-first century audience. The new galleries are planned to open in 2011. The fabric of the magnificent Victorian architecture will be maintained and the visitor drawn through the building with innovative and exciting displays.

2. Impact

The project will make substantial demands of staff and many collections must be moved in their entirety from their stores at the Royal Museum to the Museum's main storage centre at Granton. Work is already in hand and, when building work commences, some partial closure of the Royal Museum will be necessary from 2008 to 2011.

While NMS wishes to continue making loans whenever possible, there will inevitably be periods when certain collections and/or the staff resource necessary are not available to meet loan requests. This means a reduction in the service offered until the completion of the project in 2011. In addition, conservation for loans will be scaled down sooner as the Department will be moving to new accommodation in 2007 and thereafter directed primarily towards the preparation of the new displays. Research loans will be less affected in general but will still be subject to restrictions caused by difficulty of access and/or staff availability. To keep potential borrowers informed, NMS intends to publish information on its web site.

During the period of closure NMS will continue its commitment to making its collections accessible by maintaining its large number of existing long-term loans to venues in Scotland. NMS will also continue to develop opportunities to work in partnership with other Museums and to develop access to collections information online.

2. Timescale

Restrictions will apply from the issue of this notice but especially to requests for loans to be supplied during the following periods of major movement:

- January 2007 – May 2008 when collections and conservation laboratories are being moved to the National Museums Collection Centre at Granton
- May 2008 – Dec 2008 during the removal of displays from the Royal Museum
- October 2010 – April 2011 the installation of new displays in the Royal Museum

3 Process

- A longer lead-in time will normally be required for requests with a strict six-month minimum request deadline for ALL loan requests. This is from the moment a finalised list of objects has been submitted.
- The number of international loans will be constrained by lack of staff couriers and therefore can only be agreed in exceptional circumstances.
- As conservation resources will be directed towards the treatment of objects required for the new galleries, all loan requests will be assessed according to whether they can be met within the much reduced resources available. This means that objects requiring extensive treatment will not be available.
- Objects which have been identified as required for display in the new galleries will not be available for loan.
- Objects which are currently on display in the Museum of Scotland/ Royal Museum galleries will not normally be available for loan.
- Objects from collections in the process of being moved to new stores will be unavailable for loan.
- All loan requests will be considered according to the above criteria and the usual criteria of the Loans Committee below:
 1. Type of establishment requesting loan (venue must be museum, gallery or have museum-standard facilities)
 2. Purpose of loan (ie must be giving public access to objects in the form of a display or exhibition)
 3. Viability of exhibition and importance of our objects to it
 4. Mutual benefit to NMS and borrowing institution
 5. Impact on NMS displays (if items requested are on display)
 6. Availability of NMS resources to provide loan and cost/benefit

4. Publicising the Policy

The policy will be publicised on the NMS website, in the Museums Journal and through the SMC publication SMSee.

5. Relationship to NMS Partnerships Strategy

The recent Ministerial statement on cultural policy “Scotland’s Culture” (2006) recognised NMS responsibility to communicate its own collections nationally. While the Royal Museum Project will restrict the loans service in certain areas, NMS will be working with the museum community to facilitate other means, or easier routes, for access to collections. For example, material that does not require conservation, or earlier planning with key partners.

Jane Carmichael
Director of Collections