

Application guidelines

These guidelines are for organisations that have been invited to submit a Stage 2 application under the Heritage, Humanities & the Arts programme. Please log in to your account on our online application system where you will find a link to submit your Stage 2 application. This link is only made available once you have been invited to apply to Stage 2 of our application process.

If there have been any significant changes to your project since you submitted your Stage 1 application, please get in touch with your primary contact for the application (identified in your invitation email) who will be happy to advise you.

These guidelines are regularly updated so please [check our website](#) to make sure you are following the latest version.

Deadlines

Stage 2 applications should reach us by either **1 March** (for a June decision) or **1 September** (for a December decision).

Invitations to Stage 2 remain open for three funding rounds unless another deadline date has been agreed. Your invitation email will specify the latest round in which you can submit a Stage 2 application.

Content

Your Stage 2 application should contain the following information, as well as any additional details requested in your invitation letter.

1. Cover letter

A cover letter addressed to our Chief Executive, Paul Ramsbottom, and signed by the Chief Executive or equivalent of your organisation. This should be no longer than one page.

2. Organisation profile

A short introduction to the organisation, including its history, notable achievements, current aims and future plans.

3. Project Details

a) Brief summary

The email inviting you to submit a Stage 2 application may indicate specific areas of your project on which your application should focus. If so, this section should focus on these, presented in the context of the wider project. If the project is not based at the organisation's main address, please make clear the location of the project.

b) Aims, outputs and outcomes

Describe up to three aims, outputs and/or outcomes for your project, providing specific detail about what will be achieved and how. At least one of these should reflect the Wolfson Foundation's aims under the relevant programme area below:

Universities & research institutions

- Expansion of high quality research into new fields or an increased output from existing research (including new collaborations)
- Improved quality of research
- Production of work with a clear impact, benefitting either the academic community or the public
- Improved educational provision through new capital infrastructure and the effective use of technology and equipment
- Better engagement by educational institutions with the wider public.

Museums & galleries

- Excellent interpretation of permanent collections of national significance
- Better public engagement with and understanding of collections
- Increased visitor numbers
- Improved future sustainability of the organisation
- Conservation of architectural heritage.

Historic buildings & landscapes

- Conservation of sites of outstanding historic, architectural and cultural significance
- Excellent interpretation of historic buildings, landscapes & collections
- Increased numbers of visitors to historic sites
- Better public engagement with and understanding of sites of historical and cultural significance
- Improved future sustainability of the organisation.

Libraries & archives

- Enhanced care of collections of national significance
- Better public engagement with and understanding of collections
- Increased numbers of visitors to libraries and archives
- Improved future sustainability of the organisation
- Conservation of architectural heritage.

Performing arts organisations

- Improved quality of training and education facilities
- Better engagement with audiences
- Increased numbers of participants
- Improved future sustainability of the organisation
- Conservation of architectural heritage.

Please ensure that you describe your aims and outcomes crisply and concisely, making a clear link to the use of the building or equipment you are applying for, and using 'SMART' (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) language as well as giving baseline data, where relevant. For example, if your project is predicted to enable an increase in the number of visitors to a site, this should be framed as an increase of x visitors, within y timeline, compared with z current baseline.

If your application is successful, you will be asked to report on the project's progress towards

these aims. More information on reporting is available at www.wolfson.org.uk/grant-holders/reporting.

c) Public access and audiences

Provide annual visitor figures for the most recent year – and a brief overview of those audiences. You should then give an estimate for annual visitor figures after completing the project, alongside an explanation of how the figure has been calculated and what factors have been considered to make sure that it is realistic and achievable. If your project targets new audiences, you should explain how you will engage them. An explanation of the existing/alternative cultural offer within the local area or region is often helpful. (For new initiatives, we only expect to see projected numbers.)

Please provide current public opening times and whether these will change after completion of the project. If the completed facilities will have mixed use (e.g. researchers and school groups using the same space) it should be clear how this will function in practice and how the needs of different audiences will be managed.

Note: this section is not required for applicants being considered under the programme area 'Universities & Research Institutions' unless the project is focussed on public engagement. If you are unsure about how to manage this section, please get in touch and we will be happy to advise you.

d) Project timetable

Give an indication of the timeframe for your project (i.e. when work will start and finish or when purchases will be made and equipment installed). This should take realistic account of the time needed to secure remaining funding, carry out tendering and address materials shortages/supply chain problems. Your project should not be completed by the time a funding decision is made.

e) Ownership, lease and planning permission details

If the building is leased, specify the length of the lease. Provide details of whether planning permission/consents are required and if so, when they were obtained. Unless otherwise agreed, any planning permission and consents should be in place before submitting your Stage 2 application. If we have agreed exceptionally to consider an application before these are in place, you should include a brief note explaining any pre-planning processes or consultations that you have been through and the current timetable for securing the necessary permissions/consents. You do not need to refer to the exception agreed, as we will confirm this as part of the review process.

4. Finance

Note: Please do not request a specific amount or make a 'funding ask' in your application. This is because we want to understand the whole project to help us assess where we might be able to support you.

An example of how to present your project's financial information is available at www.wolfson.org.uk/finance.

a) Total project cost and breakdown

The breakdown of costs should list the cost of each element/stage, with VAT indicated separately. Only irrecoverable VAT costs should be provided. If the precise figure(s) for irrecoverable VAT are yet to be confirmed, give a best estimate of what might be irrecoverable with a short explanatory note. For phased projects, the cost of each phase should be given, as well as the total project cost. For major capital projects, the breakdown should show both

development and delivery stages including any activity costs. Give specific figures for all costs and do not round them. Your budget can include an allowance for contingency and inflation; if so, please make clear how you calculated these figures.

We ask you to provide a full cost breakdown so that we can understand the total cost of the project to the organisation. However, if your application is successful, funding can only be claimed against eligible costs. Our grants do not cover overheads, administrative costs and VAT.

b) Funding priorities

You can highlight elements of the project which you think are particularly relevant to our funding priorities (e.g. specific rooms, areas or equipment). This helps us to understand the cost of those elements within the larger project. We may consider allocating a grant to one of those specific elements, or we may make a contribution to the overall project. You should provide their cost with any irrecoverable VAT shown separately. If you are unsure about how to manage this section, please get in touch and we will be happy to advise you.

c) Fundraising summary

List the amount and source of funds already received and/or pledged, and the plan for raising the balance. For phased projects, present the funds raised towards each phase. If funds are not restricted to a particular phase this should be indicated. You should also include the dates of any forthcoming funding decisions. Unless otherwise agreed, we only consider applications when at least 25% of the necessary funds have been raised, although we do not require any match funding for a project costing up to £50,000. Match funding may include funds raised towards elements of the capital project that are not eligible for Wolfson funding (e.g. VAT), but non-capital expenditure such as staffing costs cannot be counted as match funding.

d) Running and maintenance costs

Describe any increase in staffing, operational (e.g. energy use, data storage) and maintenance costs which the project is likely to require, and how these costs will be met – making clear the split between institutional underwriting, commercial income, philanthropy and any other sources.

You can also use this section to describe how any environmental considerations have been factored into the project design, and how any negative impacts will be minimised or offset.

e) Tender process

We expect that projects are put out to competitive tender. Give a short summary of the tender process that has been/will be used.

If we require any additional financial documents to support our assessment of your application, these will be requested in your invitation to Stage 2. They should be uploaded separately via the online application system. They should not be included in the application itself.

5. Appendices

a) Additional information required specific to the relevant programme area(s)

Universities & research institutions

- Details of the institution's research outputs in the fields relevant to the project, if applicable
- Details of the research, teaching and learning for which the new or refurbished spaces will be used and how the facilities fit into the overall teaching and research provision of the institution.

Museums & galleries

- Details of the collections that will occupy new or refurbished spaces (including images)
- Details of the planned interpretation for new or refurbished spaces, including information on expert academic and curatorial advice which has informed its development.

Historic buildings & landscapes

- A recent external photograph of the building or site
- Details about the building or site, including its date, listed building grade and its historic, architectural and cultural significance in a national and, if applicable, international context
- Information on expert advice sought on any conservation and restoration work
- Details of the planned interpretation including information on expert academic and curatorial advice which has informed its development.

Libraries & archives

- Details of the collections that will occupy new or refurbished spaces (including images) and on any planned interpretation, if applicable
- Details of the research, teaching and learning for which the new or refurbished spaces will be used.

Performing arts organisations

- Details of the teaching and learning for which the new or refurbished spaces will be used
- Details of the current educational or training provision and (if possible) information on planned programming post-completion of the project
- For organisations that operate a venue, a brief overview of how the education work relates to the artistic programme.

b) Floorplans and/or an artist's impression of the completed project, if applicable

c) A list of the organisation's trustees and, if applicable, the details of any advisory groups involved in the project

Provide names, current terms of office, brief biographical information and detail of any specific responsibilities within the scope of the project (e.g. fundraising).

For joint applications, or where different bodies are responsible for the delivery of the project and its management after completion, details of both boards of trustees should be given with a brief explanation of the relationship of the organisations involved.

For advisory groups, names, roles and a brief summary of relevant expertise should be given.

Unless requested in your invitation email, you should not include a full activity plan, interpretation plan, business plan, corporate strategy or similar as an appendix.

Format

Applications should be **no longer than six pages** (excluding cover letter and any appendices). Please do not add additional title pages, section dividers, tables of contents, back covers, etc which take the document beyond six pages.

We appreciate appendices being as concise as possible. Unless otherwise agreed, appendices should be **no more than 12 pages in total**.

Applications must be standalone documents (i.e. not reliant on information previously provided or contained in other documents such as annual reports or websites).

You should try to avoid using hyperlinks as far as possible. Your application should contain all relevant information without linking to other webpages.

Submission

Applications should be uploaded via our online application system.

The submission should include:

- A PDF which combines the cover letter, main application and appendices (i.e. numbered items 1–5 above)
- Any additional information which we have requested as separate attachments

Applications that do not meet these guidelines may not be accepted.

Review process

Your application will be assessed by independent expert (or 'peer') review before being considered by our [specialist panel](#) who make recommendations to the [trustees](#). We will also undertake a separate financial review of your organisation.

Nominated reviewer (optional)

You can choose to nominate a reviewer who we will approach as part of our expert review process. This person should be independent of your organisation, not receive any funds from it or be involved in a governance capacity (e.g. trustee or committee member). They should have some knowledge of the project, be aware of the application to the Wolfson Foundation and be able to provide a helpful perspective on the project and its merits, either as someone from within the relevant sector or discipline, or who knows the local area where you operate.

You should give their name, address, phone number and email address via the online application system. Their details should not be included in the application itself.

If you are unsure whether someone is appropriate to nominate (e.g. if you think there could be a conflict of interest) please get in touch and we will be happy to advise you.

You do not have to nominate a reviewer, and this will not disadvantage your Stage 2 application, as we send all applications to our own independent reviewers.

Feedback

During the review process we may ask you to supply further information or respond to questions. We may get in contact at any point during the process but, if any questions have been raised by our independent experts, we will normally contact you in April (for a June decision) or October (for a December decision). We may also ask you for an update on e.g. pending funding decisions or the planning permission process.

Further information on our review process is available at www.wolfson.org.uk/funding/application-guidance/review-process.