

# Competency Framework

The Museums Association's Competency Framework has been designed to inform your professional development, improve your professional practice and support museums to make a positive difference to people's lives.

# The framework is grounded by the values needed to meet the potential of collections to connect with communities:

## Inclusive

Ensuring equitable access to opportunities and resources

## Participatory

Placing and valuing people at the heart of everything

## Sustainable

Ensuring the sustainability of museums, collections, communities and the planet

## Ethical

Ensuring ethical practice underpins the decisions and actions we take

These values have informed the overarching competencies<sup>1</sup> to deliver inclusive, sustainable and participatory museums.

<sup>1</sup> A competency is skills, knowledge, and behaviour that when combined result in good role performance.

There are six competencies:

-  **Developing Self and Others**
-  **Empowering Collections**
-  **Engaging Audiences and Communities**
-  **Leading and Change Making**
-  **Managing People, Money and Organisations**
-  **Sustaining Relationships and Partnerships**

# **Within each competency there is a summary statement followed by individual competency statements that provide additional expectations of skills, knowledge and behaviours.**

Each competency is divided into levels which reflect a particular stage of professional development, experience, or specialism and relates to our core professional development programmes – the Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA) and the Fellowship of the Museums Association (FMA).

The levels can be used to analyse strengths and development needs. This reflection can shape and inform professional development planning in the short-term, and longer-term career planning.

To make change and support impactful museum practice we need to understand advances in current thinking and best practice. We also need to be committed to professional development and supporting others to grow. To support our growth, we need to understand ourselves, by developing self-awareness and reflective practice.

## Level 01

- 01 Reflects on personal values and what this means for own professional practice.
- 02 Demonstrates an active commitment to learning and growth and is open to learn from others, both within and beyond museums.
- 03 Demonstrates self-care, empathy, and care for others, prioritising community wellbeing and support as part of this practice.
- 04 Understands the impact their behaviours have on others and adapts accordingly.
- 05 Keeps up to date with advances in own field and integrates current thinking and best practice into own professional practice.

## Level 02

- 01 Applies personal values in professional practice, where applicable.
- 02 Develops self through personal and professional reflection, and seeking feedback from colleagues, partners, and communities to improve professional practice.
- 03 Seeks professional groups and networks, within and outside of the sector to develop professionally.
- 04 Ensures wellbeing is prioritised in all interactions.
- 05 Provides others with regular feedback and coaches in a constructive manner.

## Level 03

- 01 Prioritises values-led work and encourages others to share their values.
- 02 Develops and shares professionalism and expertise in a specific area of interest.
- 03 Draws on external experts, and resources to harness and build own knowledge, understanding and expertise.
- 04 Contributes to the development and wellbeing of others, instilling confidence and trust through their words and actions.
- 05 Supports and enables others, beyond direct reports to generate new knowledge and insights.

## Level 04

- 01 Creates a values-led space to affect organisational and sector change.
- 02 Fosters a culture of learning, continuous improvement, and one where wellbeing is prioritised.
- 03 Role models effective working behaviours, self-care and values-led practice in words and actions.





Collections provide an opportunity for reflection, learning, debate, creativity and participation for all. In order to support dynamic and empowering collections we need to work with communities and adopt a proactive approach to the democratisation and decolonisation of collections and support partnerships and knowledge sharing.

## Level 01

- 01 Understands how museums develop, manage, share, research and improve knowledge of collections.
- 02 Understands that collections belong to communities.
- 03 Understands the difference between co-production and co-curation.
- 04 Understands the role collections play in wellbeing, placemaking and sense of belonging.
- 05 Understands and applies professional policies and standards associated with collections management, for example Spectrum, MA Code of Ethics for Museums, Decolonising Guidance etc.

## Level 02

- 01 Ensures museums develop, manage, share, research and develop knowledge of collections.
- 02 Ensures colleagues and communities share expertise, multiple perspectives and draws upon lived experiences.
- 03 Adopts a proactive approach to democratisation and decolonisation.
- 04 Works with museums, other organisations and communities to research and develop understanding about collections.
- 05 Ensures up to date and accurate information and language is used to describe collections in workshops, databases and interpretation.

## Level 03

- 01 Implements regular consultation on how collections are researched, presented, and used, and applies this in practice.
- 02 Builds and values knowledge through the exchange of ideas and understands that narratives have multiple perspectives and are not fixed.
- 03 Delivers to the diverse needs of broad audiences for example in person and digital engagement with collections.
- 04 Uses collections work to create social impact, and to involve communities in co-production and co-curation, creating long-lasting knowledge and institutional change.

## Level 04

- 01 Creates a culture where collections are accessible, shared, and prioritised.
- 02 Develops collection strategies that prioritise partnerships with others for example communities.
- 03 Fosters a culture where collections realise the potential for the planet and communities, for example climate justice.
- 04 Develops and identifies shared outcomes through high levels of participation with communities and partners, locally, nationally, or internationally.

Access to and participation in culture is a basic human right. Our role is to ensure visitors, audiences and communities feel welcome, represented, and actively and creatively engaged in all aspects of museum work. In order to do this, we need to place people at the heart of everything we do.

## Level 01

- 01 Creates a warm and welcoming environment for all, in person and digitally.
- 02 Understands the breadth and diversity of visitors, audiences, and communities.
- 03 Takes steps to meet the diverse needs and expectations of different communities.
- 04 Listens to, values, and acts on visitor, audience, and community feedback.
- 05 Understands and applies professional policies and standards associated with visitor, audience and community engagement, for example Learning and Engagement Manifesto, Kids in Museum Manifesto etc.

## Level 02

- 01 Ensures museums use collections and spaces to inspire learning, engagement, enjoyment, debate, creativity, and reflection.
- 02 Ensures museums support, attract, and represent the communities they serve.
- 03 Places participation at the heart of all work prioritising co-production; co-creation and co-curation.
- 04 Forges equal partnerships with communities that enable engagement with current ideas, networks, and people.

## Level 03

- 01 Identifies new audiences and communities to collaborate with.
- 02 Ensures there are multiple ways to engage with collections and learning experiences, in person and digitally.
- 03 Challenges structural inequalities and all forms of intolerance, discrimination, and marginalisation.
- 04 Consults and involves relevant stakeholders to ensure outputs, and outcomes meet their needs.

## Level 04

- 01 Creates a culture where, visitors, audiences and communities are at the heart of all practice.
- 02 Provides strategic direction and explicit commitment to visitor, audience and community development and engagement.
- 03 Welcomes new voices, insights, interpretations, and responses to the work undertaken, including shaping organisational strategy.

We all have a role to play in shaping the future of museums and their role in society. Anyone can be a changemaker or leader. Whether it's incremental or radical, wherever you find yourself you can affect positive and lasting change.

## Level 01

- 01 Appreciates how museums have developed over time and recognises their social impact.
- 02 Understands why responding to external changes is critical for museums to stay relevant.
- 03 Understands the role of museums and the difference between, advocacy, campaigning, and activism.
- 04 Thinks creatively and solves problems collaboratively.
- 05 Understands and applies relevant professional policies and standards, for example Museums Change Lives, Power to the People, MA Code of Ethics for Museums etc.

## Level 02

- 01 Looks outside to identify external changes and actively takes steps to address these.
- 02 Challenges status quo and existing norms and encourages beneficial risk-taking.
- 03 Advocates, campaigns, and responds to issues and causes important to the sector and society.
- 04 Uses initiative and imagination to make constructive suggestions for improvements and innovations, to create meaningful change.
- 05 Demonstrates confidence and credibility in interactions with others.

## Level 03

- 01 Monitors the external environment for emerging trends and opportunities and shares this information.
- 02 Challenges structural inequalities and all forms of intolerance, discrimination, and marginalisation.
- 03 Inspires others to think creatively and make changes for public and sector benefit.
- 04 Proactively manages the impacts of change on individuals and works to support them to explore, understand and adapt.

## Level 04

- 01 Leads and innovates in areas of national, regional, or local practice.
- 02 Fosters a culture of relevance and continuous improvement for public benefit and social justice.
- 03 Fosters a representative, creative, and supportive culture, by implementing fair and inclusive practices.
- 04 Develops and embeds new ways of working to support and sustain change making and improvement.



Developing environmentally and financially sustainable organisations is vital if museums are to deliver public benefit. We all need to understand and promote robust governance, good ethical practice, progressive and constructive management practices across a range of areas including financial and people management, marketing and fundraising.

## Level 01

- 01 Understands the importance of self-, budget-, people-, project-, resource- and time- management.
- 02 Prioritises own workload to meet conflicting and changing demands.
- 03 Suggests ideas for commercial activities, revenue generation or cost controlling.
- 04 Understands the role government, local and national, and other regulatory organisations play in the direction and operation of the sector.
- 05 Understands and applies professional policies and standards associated with good governance, for example MA Code of Ethics, Accreditation Scheme, Front of House Charter for Change etc.

## Level 02

- 01 Constructively manages people, tasks, resources, projects, and assets for public benefit.
- 02 Motivates and empowers by making people feel valued and important in interactions and by celebrating success.
- 03 Develops ideas for commercial activities, revenue generation or cost controlling.
- 04 Understands why different governance models exist and how this influences organisational direction and delivery.
- 05 Proactively advocates, applies, and embeds the MA Code of Ethics in all areas of practice.

## Level 03

- 01 Recognises the achievement and performance of others widely, gives credit, and celebrates success.
- 02 Identifies potential obstacles and proactively solves issues to minimise the impact on people and delivery.
- 03 Appreciates the dynamic context and capitalises on opportunities for increasing financial sustainability for example, fundraising, marketing, and sponsorship.
- 04 Balances the commercial and charitable requirements, valuing both financial and social capital.

## Level 04

- 01 Creates a culture where people are prioritised, adopting and future proofing people practices, for volunteers, freelancers and employees.
- 02 Integrates current thinking, best and good practice, and acknowledges good leadership within the sector and beyond.
- 03 Creates a culture where the financial and environmental sustainability of an organisation, a project or the sector is prioritised.
- 04 Values and commits to transparency, including funding relationships and collections held; welcomes challenges, invites scrutiny, and takes responsibility.

For museums to play an active role at the heart of our communities we need to develop and sustain relationships. Partnerships should bring communities together and be based on the principles of equity and respect. We should seek a diverse range of people and stakeholders to bring fresh perspectives and insight to all areas of museum work.

## Level 01

- 01 Considers and respects the perspectives and experiences of others, for example demonstrating allyship and solidarity.
- 02 Adapts own behaviour and communication style to meet the needs of others, demonstrating empathy, understanding and respect in all interactions.
- 03 Works successfully with others, for example sector bodies, professional networks, and communities.
- 04 Understands, appreciates, and respects different museum disciplines and roles, and their interdependent relationship.
- 05 Understands and applies relevant professional policies and standards, for example Power to the People, MA Code of Ethics etc.

## Level 02

- 01 Communicates honestly, transparently and inclusively and encourages dialogue and participation.
- 02 Ensures that inclusion and equity are at the heart of professional practice, building and valuing knowledge through the exchange of ideas and understands that narratives have multiple perspectives and are not fixed.
- 03 Facilitates two-way and multi-perspective communication, encouraging dialogue and exchange throughout and outside the organisation.
- 04 Builds and maintains a strong external network and looks for opportunities for external collaboration and partnership.
- 05 Consults and involves relevant stakeholders and communities to ensure outputs, and outcomes meet their needs, and the needs of society.

## Level 03

- 01 Encourages an open, safe, and approachable environment by listening and not judging.
- 02 Acknowledges different and sometimes conflicting outlooks and demonstrates a willingness to find common ground.
- 03 Helps make connections between people, putting them in touch to facilitate cooperation and collaboration.
- 04 Monitors the sector and landscape to identify potential partners and creates opportunities for strategic collaborations locally, nationally, or internationally.

## Level 04

- 01 Leads an organisation, area of practice or field of knowledge to ensure structures, strategies and policies in place deliver inclusively.
- 02 Creates a culture where, relationships, partnerships and collaborations are prioritised for mutual and multiple benefits.
- 03 Grows sustainable, meaningful, and equitable relationships and partnerships, with a range of audiences and groups, including those underrepresented or misrepresented within museums.
- 04 Proactively adapts and manages complex relationships, to ensure organisational mission, vision, and values continue to be delivered.

