



THE COLLEGE
OF OPTOMETRISTS

BOA Museum Access Policy Statement

February 2014

1. Commitment on Access

The collections of the British Optical Association Museum are a nationally important resource for learning about the history and practice of optometry, ophthalmic optics and related subjects, promoting the optometry profession and raising public awareness of its past and present importance to society.

The museum aims to make its displays, collections, services, employment and volunteering opportunities accessible to all.

In accordance with the published College *Values* (appended) and to meet our commitments as an Accredited Museum we will:

- Endeavour to remove all unnecessary barriers to users, be those physical, sensory, intellectual, cultural, attitudinal or financial.
- Aim to adopt best operational practices in museum activities and policies and to implement changes, where appropriate, as part of the *BOA Museum Forward Plan*.
- Ensure that museum staff and/or volunteers are trained and developed, where necessary, to implement these practices and policies.
- Undertake to periodically monitor and review our performance and take corrective action where necessary. We will strive continually to identify issues concerning access to our collections and/or their associated information. We will do this through ongoing self-assessment and through consultation with our members, users and other bodies in the optical community and, in particular, will use our in-house expertise and close working relations with eyesight charities to provide improved access to those with visual and other sensory impairments.
- Cover the topic of access for the visually and sensorily impaired as part of our museum interpretative strategy. In the past this has included temporary exhibitions about guide dogs and Braille writing. We will also offer advice to other museums on these topics.
- Restrict access only in as much as staffing and premises require and in order to strike a fair balance between access and the safety, security, care and management of the collections.

2. Visitors

The museum is committed to making the displays accessible to as wide an audience as possible and to showing a wide range of items from the collections, varying the topics covered through the regular rotation of the items on 'permanent' display.

The museum provides temporary exhibitions to showcase items not normally on display. Sometimes the museum will also use the temporary exhibition programme to form partnerships with other museums and organisations, or

artists specialising in 'the visual', to borrow items from their collections or contemporary works of art.

The College building has had a number of adaptations to make access easier for those with disabilities including:

- High-contrast front door mat.
- Accessible lift serving all public floors, with voice announcements and raised control buttons.
- Emergency lighting.

The museum also offers the following services:

- Loan of collapsible stools on the gallery for visitors with difficulty in standing for long periods. Plenty of seating available during First floor tours.
- Loan of hand magnifiers for visually impaired visitors or any other visitor who would benefit.
- Labels and text panels produced in line with RNIB guidelines on legibility and readability.
- Large print copies of all our permanent and temporary text panels and labels may be requested and printed on demand.
- We offer exhibits for handling to all visitors, as well as dedicated handling tours for the visually impaired.

Entrance to the museum is generally free. We make an affordable £5 per person charge for extended building tours.

In extreme circumstances during a visit, the Curator may call on colleagues with language skills in French, Spanish, Polish and Russian, although this would not extend to offering foreign language tours. Interpretative material (including web content) has, on relevant occasions, been translated into Dutch, German and Polish and the museum is always looking for imaginative ways to open up its international collections to non-English-speaking visitors.

3. Groups

Due to space restrictions, the advertised maximum group size will be 25. Where larger groups express an interest in visiting the Curator will discuss with group leaders the options for dividing groups.

The museum has received visits from groups of people with visual impairment, the after-effects of stroke and children from a school for pupils with special educational needs. In each case we welcome such groups and ask organisers to detail any special needs at the point of booking. All visits involve a variety of elements (looking, listening and handling) which can cater for different learning styles and abilities.

4. Researchers

Most of the museum collection is in reserve store and the museum is committed to bringing these objects out of store and promoting research into them. Any visitor may request, within reason, items to be brought to them from the store on demand, however serious bona fide researchers are encouraged to discuss their needs with us prior to visiting.

Access to the collection for study purposes is free of charge. The Museum curator will also conduct research in response to public enquiries without charge, as long as the request is reasonable and not too time-consuming.

Access to the store itself is not usually possible for researchers due to safety and security concerns and our inability to provide a suitable working environment in that area, however stored objects will be brought to researchers for study in the Library or other such space as is deemed appropriate. Objects may also be lent to researchers at recognised institutions for research to take place off-site. In all cases the desire to promote research for the dissemination of knowledge will be balanced by concern for the care of the collections. Where direct access to material is not possible we will endeavour to make alternative arrangements such as the electronic supply of photographs, photocopies or scanned material. A small charge may be made for such services.

The museum does not support research that may be deemed to put at risk the reputation of the College of Optometrists, or which is considered to be entirely commercial in intent. We may opt to facilitate the latter type of research in return for an appropriate fee. The museum does not offer financial valuations and does not discuss the monetary worth of its collections.

5. Remote access

The museum places a particular emphasis on extending remote access via its MusEYEuM website, as part of the wider College site (www.college-optometrists.org/museum) and its online catalogue (www.museyeum.org). It aims to produce content with particular regional or international appeal in order to serve non-visitors as well as those past or future visitors wishing to prepare for a visit or engage in further post-visit study.

Similarly the museum particularly welcomes requests for the loan of its collections from other Accredited museums and certain other reputable institutions.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed by 19 February 2019.

Submitted for approval by the Board of Trustees on
19 February 2014

Chairman

The College of Optometrists

Values



Our values underpin everything we do. They set out what we expect of everyone who is involved in the College. No one section is more important than the other. Council will review these Values every year.

Customer Focus

- We provide high-quality service to our members, our colleagues, our working partners and the public.

- We put the needs of our members first, so that they in turn can put the needs of their patients first.
- We encourage, listen to and act upon the feedback we receive.

Respect

- We show respect and consideration in our dealings with each other, our members, working partners and the public.
- We show respect in the way we talk and listen to each other.
- We speak positively and supportively about each other when we are apart.
- We show respect for and value everyone for their diverse backgrounds, experience, styles, approaches and ideas.
- We treat everyone fairly.

Integrity

- We are honest in everything we say and do.
- We say what we will do, and we do it.
- We accept responsibility for our own actions.
- We use fair, open and transparent governance, management and administration processes.

Professionalism

- We encourage each other to fulfil our potential.
- We are positive in the way we talk about the College.
- We value and protect the College's reputation and heritage.
- We show pride in who we are and what we do.
- We learn from our mistakes.
- We actively engage in discussions and support decisions once they are made.

Development

- We display openness and willingness to learn from anyone, anywhere.
- We embrace new ideas and change, and look forwards.
- We are committed to our own development, both personal and professional.