

Loans Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy covers all loans of objects for exhibition both outgoing from and incoming to the British Museum, for any duration. It covers the entire range of loans from single objects to travelling exhibitions of a large number of objects. It does not apply to movements of objects outside the British Museum for conservation or study purposes.

1.2 Making objects from the collection available through loans is part of the core purpose of the Museum and the Trustees of the British Museum agree loans under powers conferred by section 4 of the British Museum Act of 1963. This states that:

“The British Museum may lend for public exhibition (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere) any object comprised in the collections of the Museum: provided that in deciding whether or not to lend any such object, and in determining the time for which, and the conditions subject to which, any such object is to be lent, the British Museum shall have regard to the interests of students and other persons visiting the Museum, to the physical condition and degree of rarity of the object in question, and to any risks to which it is likely to be exposed.”

No loan can be made that overrides the intentions of the Act.

1.3 The policy should be read in conjunction with *The British Museum Policy on Acquisition, The British Museum Policy on Conservation, The British Museum Policy on De-accession, The British Museum Policy on Human Remains, and The British Museum Policy on Risk Management.*

2. Principles

2.1 The Trustees of the British Museum make loans for the following reasons:

- to further knowledge, understanding and scholarship relating to the objects in their care;
- to make the collections more widely accessible within the UK and throughout the world;
- to increase national and international co-operation by the exchange of material and exhibitions;
- to enhance the reputation of the British Museum and its good standing nationally and internationally.

2.2 The Trustees of the British Museum will take into account the reasonable expectations of scholars and the Museum’s visiting public, and the rarity and significance of an object when determining whether to lend.

2.3 The Trustees of the British Museum will not make loans in circumstances that would be damaging to the Museum’s standing and reputation.

2.4 The Trustees of the British Museum will lend only in circumstances when the perceived risk to the object is considered reasonable and when the borrower guarantees that the object will be returned to the Museum at the end of the loan period (the Trustees will normally expect the borrower to provide assurance of immunity from judicial seizure or comparable assurance from a government body or representative of appropriate authority).

2.5 The Trustees of the British Museum will not lend to any exhibition which includes objects that are known to have been stolen, illegally exported or illegally excavated.

- 2.6 The Trustees of the British Museum will lend only to properly established organisations and to proper venues, whether run publicly or privately, and usually only to exhibitions that are open to the general public.
- 2.7 In order to secure a loan from the Trustees of the British Museum, borrowers will have to demonstrate that the objects they have requested form an essential part of their display, and that the exhibition itself is intellectually valid and will provide public benefit.
- 2.8 In requesting loans the Trustees of the British Museum will observe the same principles as those which they apply to outgoing loans and acquisitions. In particular the Trustees will not accept the loan for display or exhibition of any object where they have good cause to believe that:
- the current holder is not legitimately entitled to retain the object;
 - the current holder cannot lend the object to the Museum free from encumbrances; or
 - the object was stolen, illegally exported or illegally imported.

This Policy was approved by the Standing Committee on 16 January 2014 and shall be reviewed not later than January 2019.