



Accreditation: What Is It?

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Accreditation is a widely recognized seal of approval that brings national recognition to museums, regardless of their size or location. Accreditation is recognition of a museum's commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement.

Being an accredited museum strengthens individual museums and the museum profession as a whole by promoting ethical and professional practices that enable museum leadership to make informed decisions, allocate and use resources wisely, and remain accountable to the public.

It recognizes excellence in individual museums and within the museum community, and serves as the field's primary vehicle for quality assurance and self-regulation.

What does Accreditation involve?

Accreditation is a rigorous, yet highly rewarding process. It requires not only a commitment to maintaining the highest standards and best practices, but a significant investment of time and resources from all levels of staff and leadership. The process is based on one year of institutional self-study followed by a site visit by two peer museum professionals. Every 10 years all accredited museums are thoroughly reviewed again.

Results of Accreditation

Credibility and Accountability

- national recognition of a museum's commitment to excellence and the highest professional standards of museum operation and public service
- a positive public image and validation of a museum's work and accomplishments
- increased credibility with funding agencies and donors
- stakeholders see that the museum's obligation to the public trust is fulfilled

Clearer Sense of Purpose

- a clearer sense of understanding of a museum's strengths, goals, priorities, and mission
- an opportunity for staff and board to reflect on their practices

Leverage and Support

- a valuable tool for advocacy with local and state governments
- improved relationships with other museums facilitating loans and traveling exhibitions
- maintenance of accreditation leverages support for capital improvements

Sustainability and a Stronger Institution

- sustained organizational development and improvement
- a governing authority better educated about museum standards
- increased level of professionalism