



Reaccreditation Self-Study

Last Revised August 2013
Hyperlinks updated Nov 2020

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This pdf version of the new Reaccreditation Self-Study is provided only as a reference document. All museums undergoing the reaccreditation process must submit their Self-Study online. The URL is available from the Accreditation Program staff.

This pdf contains all the possible questions that a museum might answer. In the online version, some questions may not appear depending on your answers; and phrasing and format may appear slightly different than you see here due to online functionality.

Museums undergoing a first-time accreditation review will use a different Self-Study.

Questions? accreditation@aam-us.org

American Alliance of Museums
2451 Crystal Drive, suite 1005
Arlington, VA 22202
www.aam-us.org

Organizational Profile

ⓘ = a Help entry is available for definitions, standards, and additional guidance / resources

1. Contact Information

- Organization Name
- Web Site
- Select Address Type
- Address
- City
- State
- Postal Code
- Country
- Phone
- Fax
- Email

Demographic Information

2. Primary Organization Type (select one)

- ☐ Aquarium
- ☐ Anthropology Museum
- ☐ Arboretum/Botanical Garden/Public Garden
- ☐ Art Museum/Center/Sculpture Garden
- ☐ Children's or Youth Museum
- ☐ Ethnically/Culturally/Tribally Specific
- ☐ General or Multi-disciplinary (several subjects)
- ☐ Hall of Fame
- ☐ Historic House
- ☐ Historic Site/Landscape
- ☐ History Museum
- ☐ Historical Society
- ☐ Military Museum/Battlefield
- ☐ Nature Center
- ☐ Natural History Museum
- ☐ Planetarium
- ☐ Presidential Library
- ☐ Science/Technology Center/Museum
- ☐ Specialized Museum (single topic/individual)
 - Name specialty:
- ☐ Transportation Museum (air/space, maritime, etc.)
- ☐ Visitor Center/Interpretive Center
- ☐ Zoo/Animal Park
- ☐ Other:

3. Additional Museum Type (select all that apply)
- ☐ Aquarium
 - ☐ Anthropology Museum
 - ☐ Arboretum/Botanical Garden/Public Garden
 - ☐ Art Museum/Center/Sculpture Garden
 - ☐ Children's or Youth Museum
 - ☐ Ethnically/Culturally/Tribally Specific
 - ☐ Hall of Fame
 - ☐ Historic House
 - ☐ Historic Site/Landscape
 - ☐ History Museum
 - ☐ Historical Society
 - ☐ Military Museum/Battlefield
 - ☐ Nature Center
 - ☐ Natural History Museum
 - ☐ Planetarium
 - ☐ Presidential Library
 - ☐ Science/Technology Center/Museum
 - ☐ Transportation Museum (air/space, maritime, etc.)
 - ☐ Visitor Center/Interpretive Center
 - ☐ Zoo/Animal Park

Museum Information

4. Governance
- ☐ College/University
 - Select your College/University's Governance Type (Government or Non-profit)
 - ☐ Corporate/For-Profit
 - ☐ Dual ⓘ
 - ☐ Government
 - Which level of government (city/municipal; county/regional; state/provincial; federal/ministerial; military)
 - ☐ Non-Profit
 - ☐ Tribal
 - Name of tribe
 - ☐ Other
5. Is the museum affiliated with U.S. institution of higher learning?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Does your museum have a parent? ⓘ
- ☐ Yes
 - Name of Parent Organization
- ☐ No
7. Legal name of museum (if different than listed in #1)

8. Is your museum part of a museum system (an operation with sites in more than one location)? ①
☐ Yes ☐ No
[if yes, the museum will answer additional questions about the system in Museum Overview]
9. On-site attendance (#) ①
10. Attendance year (for figure above)
11. Total paid staff size (#)
[additional questions about human resources are asked Operational Data]
12. Staff - Paid full-time (#) ①
13. Staff - Paid part-time (#) ①
14. Staff - Unpaid/volunteer (#)
15. Staff year (for figures above)
16. Budget (operating revenue) (\$)
[additional questions about finances are asked Operational Data]
17. Budget year (for figure above)
18. Indicate which of the following your museum offers (*optional*) ①
- ☐ Discounts on admission to Alliance members
 - ☐ Discounts in the museum store to Alliance members
 - ☐ Free admission to Alliance members
 - ☐ Free admission to the public

Museum Overview

① = a Help entry is available for definitions, standards, and additional guidance / resources

Mission

1. What is the museum's official, approved mission statement? ①
2. Date mission statement approved. ①
3. Under which provision of the IRS code is the museum (or parent organization) legally organized? ①
 - ☐ 501(c)(3)
 - ☐ 170 (B)
 - ☐ 509
 - ☐ For Profit
 - ☐ Other (describe):
[museums that are run by a government do not answer this question]

Collections

[additional collections questions appear in Operational Data]

4. Which best describes the status of the museum regarding collections ownership or use? ①
 - ☐ Own collections and/or manage collections belonging to others on an ongoing basis
 - ☐ Do not own or manage collections, but borrow and use collections for exhibits, education, or research
 - ☐ Neither own, manage, nor borrow collections--museum is not collections based
5. If the museum selected "Own collections and/or manage collections belonging to others..." what is the percentage of collections accessioned? ① *(minimum 80% accessioned required)*

Other Accreditations/Certifications

6. Is the institution accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)? ①
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes to #6, answer # 7 and #8

7. What is the institution's last AZA accreditation date?
8. Does the zoo or aquarium also have non-living or botanical collections?
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Is the museum's director a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD)?
[applies only to art museums]
☐ Yes
☐ No
 ○ Was the director a member while at another organization?
10. Is the museum certified by a state Standards of Excellence Program or other non-profit certification program?
☐ Yes
 ○ What is the name of the certification program and what level is the museum certified at (if applicable)?
☐ No
11. Is the museum LEED certified? ①
☐ Yes
 ○ what part of the facility is LEED certified and at what level?
☐ No

Accreditation Contacts ①

12. The institution must designate two contacts for the accreditation review process; **one must be the director**. Key correspondence and materials related to the steps in the process will be sent to the primary contact. If the director is not the primary contact person, s/he will not be copied on routine process related correspondence. However, all official Accreditation Commission correspondence (e.g., decision letters) will always be sent to the director and the head of the governing authority (via the institution) regardless of who is listed as the primary contact.
- a. Name, title, phone number, and email address of the Primary Contact
- b. Name, title, phone number, and email address of the Secondary Contact
- c. Name and title of the Head of the Governing Authority
- d. *If the museum has dual governance:* Name and title of the Head of the Other Governing Authority

Museum Systems

13. Is this an accreditation review of a whole museum system? ①
☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, answer #14-17

14. Indicate how the following functions are handled within the museum system. ①

	Centralized	By site	Customized for/at each site based on centralized model/policy	Does Not Apply
Mission				
Governance/ Board				
By-laws				
Planning				
Code of Ethics				
Budget				
Human resources				
Development				
Exhibit design/ Fabrication				
Exhibit research/ curation				
Conservation				
Security				
Facilities management				
Public Relations				
Marketing				
Legal counsel				
Membership				
Collections management				

15. If needed, please explain any relationships or aspects of the system structure which are not clear from answers provided above.

16. How are system-wide programmatic and budgetary goals and priorities determined?

17. List each museum/site in the museum system and provide the following information for each:

- city and state
- director/site administrator name & title

Operational Data

① = a Help entry is available for definitions, standards, and additional guidance / resources

Finances: Summary

1. Does the museum submit a 990? ①
☐Yes ☐No
2. If yes, is the 990 available on the museum's website?
☐Yes (list URL)
☐No
3. If the museum does not submit a 990, explain why it does not, and what, if anything, is submitted in place of it (to convey similar information).
4. Summarize the museum's financial position over the past five years.
For one fiscal year at a time—beginning with the most recent—provide the following information. ①

Fiscal Year	Total Operating Revenue	Total Operating Expenses	Net Surplus or Deficit (enter deficit with -)	Total Non-Operating Revenue	Total Non-Operating Expense	Market value of any institutional endowment

5. If the museum ran a deficit in the last fiscal year, please select the nature of the deficit.
☐ Planned/strategic
☐ Involuntary
☐ No deficit
☐ Not applicable
6. Explain any major changes, trends or variations in the figures in the grid above. Comment on any persistent or growing deficits or surpluses and explain what the museum is doing to address them.

Revenue

7. Give the date of the most recently completed fiscal year and complete the following Revenue and Expenses questions with data from this period.
8. Break out the museum's total operating revenue (income) for the most recently completed fiscal year, in the following categories. ①
 - Total Revenue from Public/Government Sources (\$)
 - Total Revenue from Private Sources (\$)
 - Total Revenue from Investments (\$)
 - Total Revenue from Endowment Used for Operational Expenses (\$)
 - Total Earned Revenue (\$)

Expenses

9. Break out the museum's total operating expenses (from the most recently completed fiscal year) into the following categories. ①
 - Museum-Related Activities (\$)
 - Management And General Expenses (\$)
 - Fundraising Expenses (\$)
10. What (approximate) percentage of the budget is allocated for the following activities/areas of operation? ①
 - Exhibition (%)
 - Collection storage/conservation related (including historic structures) (%)
 - Public/school programs (%)
 - Visitor services (%)
 - Administration (%)
 - Development/fundraising (%)
 - Maintenance/physical plant (%)
 - Generating earned revenue (%)
 - Other (%)

Grants and In-Kind

11. Describe additional support, including noncash contributions and in-kind services that are not reflected in the financial summary above. Please indicate who provides these resources.

Facilities

12. What is the interior square footage of the museum? ①
13. What is the total acreage of the developed exterior grounds? ①
14. Number of buildings:
15. Are any buildings historic structures? ①
☐Yes ☐No

16. Does the museum have off-site collection storage? ①
- ☐ Yes
- What is the square footage of off-site collections storage?
- ☐ No
17. If any of the facilities are shared with another organization or serve a non-museum function, describe the situation.
18. What percentage of overall space is allocated to the following functions? ①
- Exhibitions (%)
 - Collections Storage/Conservation (%)
 - Public/School Programs (%)
 - Visitor Services (%)
 - Offices/Administration (%)
 - Development (%)
 - Generating Earned Revenue (%)
 - Mechanical Areas (%)
 - Other (%)

Staffing/Human Resources

19. Full-time paid positions (#) *[online version carries over entry from Organizational Profile]* ①
20. Part-time paid positions (#) *[online version carries over entry from Organizational Profile]* ①
21. Does the museum employ seasonal staff? ①
- ☐ Yes
- How many seasonal staff does the museum employ?
- ☐ No
22. How many volunteers did the museum have during the last fiscal year? (#)
23. How many total hours were volunteered during the last fiscal year? (#)
24. What percentage of the staff are allocated to the following functions? ①
- Exhibitions (%)
 - Collections Storage/Conservation (%)
 - Public/School Programs (%)
 - Visitor Services (%)
 - Administration (%)
 - Development (%)
 - Physical Plant/Maintenance (%)
 - Generating Earned Revenue (%)
 - Other (%)

Attendance

25. Give number of hours open each year and describe other type of access the public has to the museum. ①

26. Give attendance figures for the last 5 years. ①

Fiscal Year	Total On-site Paid Attendance	Total On-site Free Attendance	On-site Attendance by K-12 in school groups

27. Explain any major changes, trends, or variations to attendance.

Collections

If the museum owns collection, or manages collections for others on an on-going basis, answer questions #28 and #29.

28. Please indicate the types of objects in the collection of the museum. Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aeronautics, space/airplanes | <input type="checkbox"/> Military, including weapons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animals, live | <input type="checkbox"/> Motion picture, audiovisual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animals, preserved | <input type="checkbox"/> Musical instruments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anthropological, ethnographic | <input type="checkbox"/> Numismatics (money) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological | <input type="checkbox"/> Paintings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Philatelic (stamps) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ceramics, glass, metals, plastics | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography, negatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documents, manuscripts | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography, prints |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture/wooden objects | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical science projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geological, mineral, paleontological | <input type="checkbox"/> Plants, live |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic building | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant, preserved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic sites | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture, indoor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horological (clocks) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture, outdoor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape features, constructed | <input type="checkbox"/> Textiles and costumes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Machinery | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maritime, historic ships | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys and dolls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medals | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation, excluding airplanes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical, dental, health, pharmacological | <input type="checkbox"/> Works of art on paper |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe): |

29. What is the number of objects that fall into the following categories of collections? ①

- Permanent (#)
- Research (#)
- Hands-on/education (#)
- Other (description and #)

Changes Since the Last Review

1. What has your museum done to address any concerns cited at the time of the last review? (What, when, how, progress, impact of change, etc.)
2. What events has your museum experienced in the past five years? (Check all that apply.)

Organizational Structure

- ☐ Merger into larger organization
- ☐ Merger of equals
- ☐ Separation from parent
- ☐ Separation from another museum
- ☐ Other change of governance
- ☐ Legal partnership with for-profit entity
- ☐ Change of Director
- ☐ Sudden Departure/Death of a Director
- ☐ Death of a founder
- ☐ Organizational restructuring
- ☐ Staff turnover (> 30%)
- ☐ Staff layoffs (>10%)

Disaster

- ☐ Earthquake
- ☐ Fire
- ☐ Flood
- ☐ Hurricane
- ☐ Tornado
- ☐ Other natural or man-made disaster

Facility

- ☐ Opening a new museum/site
- ☐ Closing a museum/site
- ☐ Expansion of same facility
- ☐ Construction of new facility
- ☐ Moving to different facility
- ☐ Restoration/renovation of a building
- ☐ Acquisition of a satellite property

Collections

- ☐ Acquired significant collection
- ☐ Significant deaccessioning
- ☐ Ownership dispute/claim against museum or repatriation of object(s)
- ☐ Theft of collections
- ☐ Significant change in scope/focus of collections/collecting

Finances

- ☐ Retrenchment
- ☐ Loss of significant funding source
- ☐ Budget increase >25%
- ☐ Budget decrease >25%
- ☐ Capital campaign
- ☐ Cancellation of capital improvements or expansion plans
- ☐ Embezzlement/fiscal irregularities

Other

- ☐ Significant mission change
 - ☐ Significant change in interpretive philosophy/strategy
 - ☐ Significant change in educational programming
 - ☐ Media/public controversy
 - ☐ Received major award/recognition or gift
 - ☐ Legal issue that impacted operations or mission
 - ☐ Ethical situation that impacted operations or mission
 - ☐ None of the above
 - ☐ Other
3. For any items checked in the list above, please provide a few details on the nature and degree of the change, its impact, and how your museum responded to or accommodated these changes.
4. Is your museum currently engaged in, or anticipating in the next year or so, any of the following? (Check all that apply.)
- ☐ Director leaving/retiring
 - ☐ Opening new building/major construction/renovation
 - ☐ Capital campaign
 - ☐ Merging with another institution
 - ☐ Major organizational restructuring
 - ☐ Change in governance type/structure (e.g., from municipal to private non-profit)
 - ☐ Change of mission
 - ☐ Significant change in scope/focus of collection/collecting
 - ☐ Significant (>25%) change in funding
 - ☐ Other (anything else that will require major amounts of your time and energy)
 - ☐ None of the above
5. For any items checked in the list above, please briefly explain how your museum is planning for or managing these changes.
6. Describe your museum's greatest challenges right now.
7. If the makeup, resources, needs or behaviors of your museum's geographic community or audiences have changed in the last three to five years, describe the changes, the impact on the museum, and how the museum has adapted/responded.
8. What are the needs, wants, and challenges of the people your museum serves or wants to serve? What is the museum doing to address them?
9. List one or more specific, measurable impact/outcome your museum's educational activities have had on its audiences or community. What was the indicator of this impact?

10. Share a story about an instance where your museum feels it took a risk, made a change, or did something innovative that propelled it to the next level of fulfilling its educational, public service, and/or collections stewardship role.
11. ☐ Confirm the museum is in compliance with:
- Federal, state, and local laws
 - Legal, regulatory and financial reporting requirements
 - Sarbanes-Oxley requirement for a Board-approved document destruction/retention policy *(if applicable)*
 - Sarbanes-Oxley requirement for a Board-approved whistleblower protection policy *(if applicable)*
12. An accredited museum is more than the sum of its parts. Tell us why your museum matters and what gives you the greatest pride. Describe for the Commission why your museum is important, to whom it is important, and how it makes a difference.

Attachments

① = a Help entry is available for definitions, standards, and additional guidance / resources
Online: Upload and provide approval or last revision dates

Core Documents ① (all required unless otherwise noted)

1. Institutional Plan(s)
2. Collections Management Policy *(required only if the museum owns, manages or borrows collections)*
OR
Borrowing Policies *(required for institutions that do not own or manage collections, but borrow and use objects for exhibits, education or research)*
3. Institutional Code of Ethics
4. Emergency Response & Disaster Preparedness Plan

Financial, Governance, and Administrative Documents ① (all required unless otherwise noted)

5. Audit, including management letters, for the last two fiscal years
OR
End of year financial statements with balance sheet for the last two fiscal years *if the museum does not do an audit*
6. Current fiscal year's budget
7. Delegation of Authority to Director
8. Organizational chart
9. *If applicable:* Most recent IRS Form 990 *(required if a museum is subject to 990 filing requirements)*
10. *If applicable:* Documentation regarding the importance of the museum to the parent organization and expressing the parent organization's commitment to support the museum *(required if museum has parent organization, e.g., a university)*
11. Other documents *if/ as needed*

Other plans: submit if the museum has them ① (all optional unless otherwise noted)

12. Collections Plan
13. Conservation Plan
14. Interpretive Plan or educational master plan *(required for non-collections based institutions)*
15. Completed General Facility Report

Submit if accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums①

16. Completed AZA Accreditation Questionnaire *(only for first-time Alliance accreditation reviews)*
17. AZA Accreditation Visiting Committee Report
18. AZA Accreditation Decision Letter

The American Alliance of Museums may select your Self-Study attachments for inclusion in its Sample Documents Library. We will exclude your financial statements, 990, and budget attachment. We will not alter document content other than to redact proprietary security details or personally identifiable information. Unless you withdraw permission in writing, you are granting permission to the Alliance to distribute the remaining documents, in whole or in part, to Tier 3 Alliance members in electronic format via its website.

Self-Study Help

About the Self-Study Help

Self-Study Questions and Attachments that have a Help entry are indicated with ⓘ.

There are several categories of Help: Standard, Best Practice, Definition, FYI (guidance on answering the question), and Resource.

If you still need:

- Clarification about how to answer a question, email: accreditation@aam-us.org.
- More resources and information on best practices: all Alliance members can access the online [Professional Resources Library](#).
- Sample documents and customized research assistance (Alliance Tier 3 museum members only): contact the Alliance [Information Center](#) at infocenter@aam-us.org.

Self-Study Help: Organizational Profile

Museum Information

4. Governance: Dual	Definition: Dual (aka "Joint") Governance is a governance structure in which two or more entities share governance of the museum. This involves dividing or sharing basic governance responsibilities such as determining mission and purpose; hiring, supporting, and evaluating the director; strategic planning; obtaining and managing resources; and monitoring the organization's programs and services. For example: a museum might be jointly governed by a city government (which owns the collections and the building and employs the staff) and a private nonprofit (which determines museum policy and operates the museum). Or a university may own and manage a museum, but delegate responsibility for determining programs and services to an advisory board. Dual governance does not automatically include museums that have separately incorporated "Friends" organizations, unless the Friends organization has significant responsibility for governance of the museum delegated to it in writing. In case of joint governance, representatives of all governing authorities should be involved in completing, reviewing, and approving the information in the self-study.
6. Does your museum have a parent?	Definition: A parent organization is a larger organization within which a museum operates. Examples of parent organizations include: colleges or universities; tribal, municipal, state, or federal governments; state historical societies supervising multiple sites/functions; corporate foundations, etc.
8. Is your museum part of a museum system?	Definition: A museum system is a museum operation that has a complex organizational structure and/or facilities in more than one location.
9. On-site attendance	FYI: There is no one, standardized way of counting attendance. Report using whatever figures your museum collects.
12. Staff - Paid full-time	FYI: The specific number of hours that constitutes a "full-time" designation is determined by a museum's human resource policies and state employment law. The number here is linked to the same question in Operational Data. Data entered here will update the field in the other form, and vice versa. <i>For museums seeking accreditation:</i> regarding the full-time director, the Accreditation Commission expects that the directorship is his or her primary employment and that s/he works sufficient hours to adequately administer the museum. The accreditation eligibility requirement for a full-time director (or equivalent position) cannot be met by combining the hours of more than one individual.
13. Staff - Paid part-time	FYI: The number here is linked to the same question in Operational Data. Data entered here will update the field in the other form, and vice versa.
18. Indicate which of the following [discounts] your museum offers...	FYI: Answering this question is optional and responses do not impact the accreditation process. Some museums choose to offer these discounts as a professional courtesy to Alliance members. This is a voluntary decision and is not required for Alliance membership or accreditation.

Self-Study Help: Museum Overview

Mission

1. What is the museum's official, approved mission statement?	<p>Definition: A statement approved by the museum's governing authority that defines the purpose of a museum—its reason for existence. The mission statement establishes the museum's identity and purpose, provides a distinct focus for the institution, and identifies its role and responsibilities to the public and its collections.</p> <p>Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Elements of a Mission Statement • AAM Standards Regarding an Institutional Mission Statement <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance Reference Guide: Developing a Mission Statement
2. Date mission statement approved.	<p>FYI: This should be the most recent approval date. If the mission statement has been revised and/or reapproved, use the most recent approval date as opposed to the original approval date.</p>
3. Under which provision of the IRS code is the museum (or parent organization) legally organized?	<p>FYI: Museums that are not incorporated separately from a parent organization should answer this question as it applies to the parent's tax exempt status.</p>

Collections

4. Which best describes the status of the museum regarding collections ownership or use?	<p>Definition: Collections are objects, living or nonliving, that museums hold in trust for the public. Items usually are considered part of the museum's collections once they are accessioned. Some museums designate different categories of collections (permanent, research, educational) that functionally receive different types of care, use, and documentation. These categories and their ramifications are established in the museum's collections management policy.</p>
5. What is the percentage of collections accessioned (minimum 80% accessioned required)?	<p>Definition: Accessioning is: a) The formal act of legally accepting an object or objects to the category of material that a museum holds in the public trust. b) The creation of an immediate, brief, and permanent record utilizing a control number for an object or group of objects added to the collection from the same source at the same time, for which the museum has custody, right, or title. Customarily, an accession record includes, among other data, the accession number; date and nature of acquisition (gift, excavation, expedition, purchase, bequest, etc.); source; brief identification and description; condition; provenance; value; and name of staff member recording the accession.</p>

Other Accreditations/Certifications

6. Is the institution accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)?	<p>FYI: In an effort to streamline the Alliance accreditation process, AZA-accredited zoos/aquariums can substitute <i>some</i> of their AAM accreditation Self-Study with their AZA accreditation report and related materials. Per an agreement between the Alliance and AZA, institutions applying for or renewing their AAM accreditation must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide AAM with copies of their AZA application package, Site Visit Report, written response to that report, and final decision letter. • Provide AZA with written permission to share with the Alliance Accreditation Program information about the institution's last AZA review, current AZA accreditation status, and any concerns that may impact the AAM review (e.g., areas the Visiting Committee and Accreditation Commission should know about). Please provide this permission to AZA directly. <p>If needed, additional information and documents may be required at other points in the accreditation review process.</p>
8. Does the zoo or aquarium also have non-living or botanical collections?	<p>FYI: If an AZA-accredited institution has additional collections which were not covered as part of the AZA accreditation review, such as botanical or historical collections, the organization will need to answer some collections questions. The collections question will refer to these collections and not the living animal collections which were reviewed by AZA.</p>
11. Is the museum LEED certified?	<p>Definition: LEED is a third-party certification program and the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2000 through a consensus-based process, LEED serves as a tool for buildings of all types and sizes. LEED certification offers third-party validation of a project's green features and verifies that the building is operating exactly the way it was designed to. For more information, see the LEED program website. www.usgbc.org/LEED.</p>

Accreditation Contacts

12. Director	<p>Definition: For the purposes of accreditation, the director is the individual to whom the governing authority delegates authority for the day-to-day operations of the museum. This person's title may vary, e.g., director, president, CEO, Museum or Site Administrator, etc.</p>
12. Head of the Governing Authority	<p>Definition: In a private non-profit museum governed by a board of trustees, this is the board chair, president, or equivalent—the chief nonpaid officer. <i>For museums with a governance structure in which the museum director reports indirectly, through a chain of command, to the actual governing authority:</i> the head of the governing authority is considered to be the individual within the larger organization to whom the director reports. For example, for accreditation purposes, the head of the governing authority might be the dean or provost of a university, the director of parks and recreation for a city government, or the military post commander for a military museum.</p>

Museum Systems

<p>13. Is this an accreditation review of a whole museum system?</p>	<p>Definition: A museum system is a museum operation that has a complex organizational structure and/or facilities in more than one location.</p> <p>FYI: Depending on the organizational structure and size of the museum system, the system can seek accreditation as one entity as a whole, or selected individual sites can seek accreditation independently. If a museum system decides to undergo a review as a system, all museums/sites within it must be included in the review and, on the whole, the system must meet accreditation standards. When a museum system is accredited, each museum part of the system which can be independently identified by the public as a separate museum will appear on the list of accredited institutions. Parts of the system which are not museums can be included in the review if they are in support of the museum functions, but they will not appear on the list. Contact the accreditation program staff with any questions or assistance for determining if the system should come in as whole or only specific sites.</p>
<p>14. Indicate how the following functions are handled within the museum system.</p>	<p>FYI: These answers will help everyone reviewing the institution during the accreditation review process better understand how the system works. If the majority of functions, especially administrative, are handled by site, the sites in the system might need to undergo individual accreditation reviews. Contact Accreditation Program staff for assistance.</p>

Self-Study Help: Operational Data

Finances: Summary

1. Does the museum submit a 990?	Definition: Form 990 is an annual reporting return that certain federally tax-exempt organizations must file with the IRS. It provides information on the filing organization's mission, programs, and finances. To determine if the museum should be filing this, see the IRS website: https://www.irs.gov/charities-and-nonprofits
4. Summarize the museum's financial position over the past five years. (Grid)	FYI: Enter information about revenue and expenditures the past five completed fiscal years. If your institution has dual governance, include the combined revenue from all sources as it directly relates to the museum.
4. Fiscal Year	Definition: A fiscal year (or financial year, or sometimes budget year) is a period used for calculating annual ("yearly") financial statements.
4. Total Operating Revenue	Definition: Operating revenue includes revenue from all sources used to support the museum's general operations in a given fiscal year. Revenue includes any portion of revenue from the endowment that is applied to operating expenses in a given year. It does not include capital expenditures.
4. Total Operating Expenses	Definition: Operating expenses include all expenditures supporting the museum's general operations in a given fiscal year, including exhibitions, education, conservation, collections management, collections acquisitions, research, training, development and administration.
4. Net Surplus or Deficit	Definition: The amount of revenue or deficit recognized after certain operating expenses have been deducted. The operating expenses include tax and dividend payments.
4. Total Non-Operating Revenue	Definition: Non-operating revenue is revenue attributed to temporarily or permanently restricted funds, such as endowment contributions and pledges, capital campaign contributions and pledges, all realized capital gains and losses that are rolled back into the principal and income from capital campaigns.
4. Total Non-Operating Expense	Definition: Non-operating expenses are expenses related to temporarily or permanently restricted funds, such as endowment contributions and pledges, capital campaign contributions and pledges, realized capital gains and losses that are rolled back into the principal and capital expenditures.
4. Market value of any institutional endowment	Definition: Endowments are funds with permanent or term restrictions placed upon them by a donor, other funder, or governing board. Usually, just the interest or an amount determined by some other formula, such as a five-year rolling average, can be transferred to the operating budget. Include endowments dedicated to the support of this museum, restricted or unrestricted, whether directly held by your institution or by others (such as a parent organization or separate foundation).

5. If the museum ran a deficit in the last fiscal year, please select the nature of the deficit.	Definition: A deficit is the amount by which expenses exceed revenues in a given fiscal year. Planned/strategic deficits are incurred as a means of investing in growth or improvements. Involuntary deficits are incurred when the museum is unable to balance the budget by generating sufficient income or controlling expenditures.
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Revenue

8. Total Revenue from Public/Government Sources	Definition: Funds from public/government sources are monies provided directly by federal, state, local, or tribal governments. If your institution's parent organization is a government entity (including a public college or university), include funding support from your parent organization in this category.
8. Total Revenue from Private Sources	Definition: Funds from private sources are monies provided by private individuals (through donations), private foundations, corporations, etc. If your parent organization is a non-government entity, include funding support from your parent organization in this category.
8. Total Revenue from Investments	FYI: Only include the portion of revenue from investments that was available to meet operating expenses. The portion of operating revenue derived from investments is typically determined by a museum's spending policy and may include capital gains, dividends, interest, etc.
8. Total Revenue from Endowment Used for Operational Expenses	FYI: Only include the portion of revenue from the endowment that was available to meet operating expenses. The portion of operating revenue derived from an endowment is typically determined by a museum's spending policy and may be just the interest or an amount determined by some other formula, such as a five-year rolling average.
8. Total Earned Revenue	Definition: Earned revenue is income from shop sales, sales via the internet, admission, food service, facility rental, memberships, etc. Revenue from contracts goes here.

Expenses

9. Museum-Related Activities	Definition: Museum-related activities are those activities for which the organization was created to conduct (i.e., mission-related activities), and that form the basis of its nonprofit status. For museums, this includes expenses related to exhibits, collections, programs, and other mission-related activities.
9. Management and General Expenses	Definition: Management and general expenses consist of expenses related to the day-to-day operation of an organization. Included are items such as personnel, accounting, legal services, general insurance, and office management (i.e., the sorts of things needed to run any kind of organization, regardless of the fact that it is a museum).
9. Fundraising Expenses	Definition: Fundraising expenses are the costs related to soliciting contributed revenue.
10. What (approximate) percentage of the	FYI: Your answer indicates where the museum's resources are being spent. Your figures must add up to 100%. They can be approximate and

budget is allocated for the following activities/areas of operation?	rounded-off.
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Facilities

12. What is the interior square footage of the museum?	FYI: Provide the total square footage of interior spaces, including offices, collections storage, exhibit space, museum store, etc. If there is more than one building at this physical location provide the sum of all buildings. If the museum exists within a larger, non-museum structure, report only the square footage occupied by museum activities.
13. What is the total acreage of the developed exterior grounds?	Definition: Report on the portion of the grounds that is developed and actively maintained by the institution, which may include parking lots, gardens, nature trails, etc. Your response should not include land that is not developed, maintained, or actively used by the museum.
15. Are any buildings historic structures?	Definition: Accreditation does not define what constitutes a historic structure—this is a determination we expect museums to make for themselves with the input of their neighbors and communities. Some museums in historic structures identify their building as something that they hold in the public trust and treat it as part of their collection. For a discussion of “what is historic?” see the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s web site https://savingplaces.org/
16. Does the museum have off-site collection storage?	Definition: Off-site collections storage is located at a different site than the staff responsible for care of the collections. For the purposes of accreditation, a separate, dedicated storage facility housing both collections staff and collections would not count as “off-site.” A museum owned/rented support building (warehouse, etc.) used for collections storage that does not house collections staff would count.
18. What percentage of overall space is allocated to the following functions?	FYI: Your answer indicates how the museum is allocating space. Your figures must add up to 100%. They can be approximate and rounded-off.

Staffing/Human Resources

19. Full-time paid positions	FYI: The specific number of hours that constitutes a “full-time” designation is determined by a museum’s human resource policies and state employment law. The number here is linked to the same question in Organizational Profile. Data entered here will update the field in the other form, and vice versa. <i>For museums seeking accreditation:</i> regarding the full-time director, the Accreditation Commission expects that the directorship is his or her primary employment and that s/he works sufficient hours to adequately administer the museum. The accreditation eligibility requirement for a full-time director (or equivalent position) cannot be met by combining the hours of more than one individual.
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20. Part-time paid positions	FYI: The number here is linked to the same question in Organizational Profile. Data entered here will update the field in the other form, and vice versa.
21. Does the museum employ seasonal staff?	Definition: Seasonal staff means a worker who performs labor or services on a seasonal basis, such as interpreters hired for the summer or retail workers employed exclusively during holiday seasons.
24. What percentage of the staff are allocated to the following functions?	FYI: Your answer indicates how the museum is allocating personnel resources. Your calculations can be based on either staff numbers or time. Your figures must add up to 100%. They can be approximate and rounded-off.

Attendance

25. Give number of hours open each year and describe other type of access the public has to the museum.	<p>Definition: “Hours open” in a year means regular, published, predictable hours.</p> <p>FYI: Do not count the hours when the museum only accommodates tours for school groups; is only available by appointment; is rented out for special events; or used by other groups for non-museum/non-mission related activities. Include these types of usage of the museum, if any are applicable, in your description of other types of access the public has to the museum.</p> <p><i>For museums seeking accreditation:</i> if the museum is not open at least 1000 hours/year, contact Accreditation Program staff. This is an eligibility requirement for accreditation.</p>
26. Give attendance figures for the last 5 years.	FYI: There is no one, standardized way of counting attendance. Report using whatever figures your museum collects.

Collections

29. What is the number of objects that fall into the following categories of collections.	FYI: Collections are often classified into categories (e.g., permanent, teaching, research, reference) based on how they are acquired, cared for, made accessible, or used by the museum. These categories are usually defined in the collections management policy, which provides specifics on the museum’s policies regarding each category of collection. There are no standard definitions for different categories of collections, though there are some trends. For example, many museums use the term “teaching collection” to refer to material that is safe to handle, made accessible for hands-on use, and held to a lower standard of care. Many museums use the term “permanent collection” to refer to material that they intend to hold in perpetuity and for which they provide the highest level of care. Note that some categories of collections (notably teaching or reference) are designated as non-accessioned by some museums—the material is not held in the public trust, for example, and not subject to the museum’s policies regarding deaccessioning or use of funds resulting from disposition. These categories and their ramifications are established in the museum’s collections management policy.
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Self-Study Help: Attachments

Core Documents

1. Institutional Plan(s)	<p>Definition: An institutional plan is a comprehensive plan that broadly delineates where the institution is going and provides sufficient detail to guide implementation. It sets priorities and guides important decisions that are oriented towards the future. Some museums split this into two parts: a multi-year big-picture plan that sets strategies, goals, and priorities (sometimes this is referred to as a strategic or long-range plan) and an operational plan that provides the details needed to implement the decisions in the strategic or long-range plan. The operational plan usually focuses on a short period of time and is typically geared to the museum's budget year (sometimes this is referred to as an implementation plan). There is great variability in how museums refer to these planning documents and divide particular functions between them.</p> <p>Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Elements of an Institutional Plan • AAM Standards Regarding Institutional Planning <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance Reference Guide: Developing an Institutional Plan
2. Collections Management Policy	<p>Definition: A Collections Management Policy is a written document, approved by the governing authority, which specifies the museum's policies concerning all collections-related issues, including accessioning; documentation; storage; use and disposition. Policies are general guidelines that regulate the activities of the organization. They provide standards for exercising good judgment.</p> <p>Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Collections Management Policy is required for all institutions that own collections or manage collections belonging to others on an ongoing basis. • Required Elements of a Collections Management Policy • AAM Standards Regarding Collections Stewardship <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance Reference Guide: Developing a Collections Management Policy
2. Borrowing Policies	<p>Standard: Required for institutions that do not own or manage collections, but borrow and use objects for exhibits, education or research.</p> <p>Definition: institutions that don't own or manage collections, but borrow and use objects for exhibits, education or research must have borrowing policies that articulate the museum's policies for borrowing objects lent by others (e.g., who the museum will borrow from, for what purpose, the loan approval process, authority, etc.). The policies should also address how the museum will care for the objects and meet the loan conditions (e.g., security, access, handling, monitoring and control of environmental conditions, housekeeping, records/loan documentation, etc.).</p> <p>FYI: Borrowing and care policies can be separate documents or combined.</p>

3. Institutional Code of Ethics	<p>Definition: A code of ethics is a written set of guidelines to help all members of an organization (including board, staff, and volunteers) conduct their actions in accordance with the museum's and the museum field's primary values and ethical standards.</p> <p>Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Elements of an Institutional Code of Ethics • AAM Standards Regarding an Institutional Code of Ethics <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance Reference Guide: Developing an Institutional Code of Ethics <p>FYI: The date provided should be the most recent approval date. If the code has been revised and reapproved, use the most recent approval date as opposed to the original approval date.</p>
4. Emergency Response & Disaster Preparedness Plan	<p>Definition: An emergency response & disaster preparedness plan is a document that helps ensure the museum is in a state of readiness to minimize the loss of life, injury, and damage to property and collections resulting from a disastrous event. The plan should provide for the rescue, relief, rehabilitation, and stabilization of other services in the aftermath of the disaster and ensure the museum has the capability and resources to continue to sustain essential functions without being overwhelmed by the demands of the circumstances.</p> <p>Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Elements of an Emergency Response & Disaster Preparedness Plan • AAM Standards Regarding Facilities and Risk Management <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance Reference Guide: Developing an Emergency Response & Disaster Preparedness Plan

Financial, Governance, and Administrative Documents

5. Audit management letters for the last two fiscal years	<p>Definition: The management letter from an auditor identifies issues not required to be disclosed in the Annual Financial Report but represents the auditor's concerns and suggestions noted during an audit.</p>
6. Current fiscal year's budget	<p>Definition: A budget is a document summarizing planned income and expenses in a given year and is usually approved by the governing authority. Budget amounts often are divided into major categories, e.g., salaries, benefits, equipment, office supplies, conference registration, travel, etc. Museums sometimes write budgets by program area, showing expenses and income by department.</p>
7. Delegation of Authority to Director	<p>Definition: The delegation of authority is the written authorization through which the museum's governing body formally delegates authority for the management of the museum's day-to-day operations to the museum director (or equivalent paid staff member). The authority so delegated includes, but is not limited to, implementation of policy, management of all programs, and management and supervision of staff and volunteers (including hiring and firing).</p> <p>Standard: AAM Standards Regarding Delegation of Authority</p>

8. Organizational chart	Definition: An organizational chart is a diagram that shows the structure of an organization and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs; the chart should include the museum's parent organization, governing authority, partner organizations, advisory boards, supporting organizations, staff, and volunteers, as applicable.
9. <i>If applicable:</i> Most recent IRS Form 990 (required if a museum is subject to 990 filing requirements)	Definition: Form 990 is an annual reporting return that certain federally tax-exempt organizations must file with the IRS. It provides information on the filing organization's mission, programs, and finances. For more information on who is required to file: http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i990.pdf .
10. <i>If applicable:</i> Documentation regarding the importance of the museum to the parent organization and expressing the parent organization's commitment to support the museum (required if the museum has a parent organization, e.g., a university)	Definition: If the museum has a parent organization, this documentation codifies and expresses the importance of the museum to the parent and its commitment to support the museum (e.g., resolution of permanence passed by parent; parent organization's by-laws or organizing documents; parent organization's institutional plan; memorandum of understanding or management agreement between the parent and the museum). Details are outlined in the Standard for Statements of Support from Parent Organizations. Standard: Statements of Support from Parent Organizations
11. Other documents	FYI: If you have any other documents that will give a better or more comprehensive view of the museum as a whole, please upload and describe here. The museum also may be asked to provide additional information as needed to complete the review.

Other Plans

12. Collections Plan	Definition: A collections plan guides the content of the collections and leads staff in a coordinated and uniform direction over time to refine and expand the value of the collections in a predetermined way. The plan is time-limited and identifies specific goals to be achieved. It provides a rationale for those choices and specify how they will be achieved. The plan also identifies who will implement the it, when implementation will happen, and what implementation will cost.
13. Conservation plan	Definition: A conservation plan is a strategy for the long-term care of the collection. It typically includes an analysis of the museum's setting and resources in terms of conservation requirements, identifies priorities, and sets specific strategies for implementation.
14. Interpretive plan or educational master plan (required for non-collections based institutions)	Definition: An interpretive plan outlines what stories and messages the museum wants to convey through a variety of media, such as exhibits, programming, and publications. It may include the institution's interpretive philosophy, educational goals, and target audiences. A museum may develop an interpretive plan for an individual component of its operation—for example, for its permanent exhibits or for one of its historic sites.

15. Completed General Facility Report	<p>FYI: The RC-AAM General Facility Report was created by the Registrars Committee of the AAM as a means of facilitating the exchange of information between museums about an institution's physical plant and its policies and procedures related to areas such as security, handling, and environmental controls. This report often is used by museums and insurance personnel to determine whether an institution has the ability to safely borrow, ship, handle, secure, and install objects requested for loan. It is not required for accreditation, but if you have completed it, it is very informative for the Visiting Committee and Accreditation Commission. How to get a blank copy: the General Facility Report is available for purchase from the Alliance bookstore.</p>
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AZA Accreditation

16-18 If Accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)	<p>In an effort to streamline the Alliance accreditation process, AZA-accredited zoos/aquariums can substitute <i>some</i> of their AAM accreditation Self-Study with their AZA accreditation report and related materials. Per an agreement between the Alliance and AZA, institutions applying for or renewing their AAM accreditation must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide AAM with copies of their AZA questionnaire (application) and/or Site Visit Report, written response to that report, and final decision letter. • Provide AZA with written permission to share with the Alliance Accreditation Program information about the institution's last AZA review, current AZA accreditation status, and any concerns that may impact the AAM review (e.g., areas the Visiting Committee and Accreditation Commission should know about). Please provide this permission to AZA directly.
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