MUSEUM ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION

Universal Accessibility for People of Determination

Purpose of the Assessment

This checklist is designed to evaluate the accessibility, inclusivity, safety and usability of a museum for visitors with different disabilities, including:

1. People with physical disabilities and wheelchair users.
2. People with visual impairments, including blind and low-vision visitors.
3. People with hearing impairments, including Deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors.
4. People with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and visitors with sensory processing differences.
5. Older adults and visitors with temporary or hidden disabilities.

The assessment covers the entire visitor journey, starting from the parking area and external pathways, continuing through the museum entrance, reception, exhibition galleries and visitor facilities, and ending with outdoor exhibition areas and emergency evacuation.

Important technical note: The measurements below are recommended assessment benchmarks, primarily based on internationally recognised accessibility principles, including the WDU Standards, universal design principles and accessible museum practices.

The measurements are expressed in centimetres (cm), unless otherwise stated.

PART 1 – EXTERNAL ACCESSIBILITY

1. Accessible Parking Spaces

Objective: To ensure that visitors with mobility disabilities can park safely and reach the museum entrance independently.

Assessment criteria	Recommended technical standards
Number of accessible parking spaces	Provide accessible parking in accordance with the applicable local parking ratio. As an international benchmark, the WDU requires 1 space for 1–25 total spaces, 2 for 26–50, 3 for 51–75 and 4 for 76–100.
Standard accessible parking bay	Minimum 260 cm wide × 550 cm long, following the UAE Universal Design Code benchmark.
Parking for wheelchair-accessible vans	Provide a wider bay or additional access aisle to accommodate wheelchair lifts and vehicle ramps.
Side access aisle	Minimum 120 cm wide, connected directly to an accessible pedestrian route.
Location	As close as possible to the accessible entrance, preferably within 50 metres.
Ground surface	Firm, stable, level and slip-resistant. Maximum recommended gradient 2%.
Parking identification	International Symbol of Accessibility painted on the ground and displayed on a vertical sign.

Signage height	Approximately 220 cm above ground, following the UAE code benchmark.
Lighting	Uniform lighting without glare or dark areas, particularly at night.
Protection	Provide shaded parking where possible to protect visitors from heat and sunlight.

Additional assessment points:

- Accessible parking must not be used for general parking.
- The access aisle must not be obstructed by wheel stops, columns or landscaping.
- A wheelchair user must be able to transfer from the vehicle without entering the traffic lane.
- Accessible parking should be distributed near accessible entrances where multiple entrances exist.

Parking ratio assessment: Record the total number of parking spaces and calculate the actual percentage of accessible parking spaces:

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For example, 5 accessible spaces out of 100 total spaces = 5%.

2. Accessible Route from Parking to the Sidewalk

Objective: To provide a continuous, obstacle-free route for wheelchair users, visually impaired visitors and older adults.

Assessment criteria	**Recommended dimensions**
Pedestrian pathway width	Minimum 150 cm; preferably 180 cm.

Passing areas	Minimum 150 × 150 cm where the pathway is narrower than 150 cm.
Maximum recommended pathway gradient	5% (1:20).
Cross slope	Preferably not more than 2%.
Curb ramp width	Minimum 120 cm; preferably aligned with the accessible pathway.
	Preferably 5–8%, subject to applicable local requirements.
Surface	Firm, stable, even and non-slip.
Changes in level	Avoid sudden level differences; provide properly designed transitions.
Drainage	No standing water or drainage channels that trap wheelchair wheels or cane tips.

Additional requirements:

- The route must connect the accessible parking space directly to the sidewalk.
- Tactile warning paving must be installed where pedestrians encounter vehicle routes or hazardous level changes, in accordance with the tactile paving design standard.
- No trees, advertising boards, bins or street furniture should obstruct the route.
- Provide sufficient lighting and visual contrast between the pedestrian route and surrounding surfaces.

3. Accessible Ramp from the Sidewalk to the Museum Entrance

Objective: To ensure independent access to the museum without requiring wheelchair users to use stairs.

Assessment criteria	Recommended dimensions
Ramp clear width	Minimum 150 cm recommended for a public museum.
Preferred ramp slope	5% or less wherever possible.
Maximum ramp slope benchmark	8.33% (1:12), subject to applicable regulations.
Maximum rise per ramp run	65 cm under the WDU benchmark.
Landing at the top and bottom	Minimum 150 × 150 cm.
Landing at a change of direction	Minimum 150 × 150 cm.
Handrail height	Approximately 85–90 cm.
Second handrail	Approximately 65–70 cm, where appropriate.
Handrail diameter	Approximately 3.5–4.5 cm.
Handrail extension	Approximately 30 cm beyond the beginning and end of the ramp, where feasible and safe.
Edge protection	Minimum 10 cm high curb or equivalent wheel-stop protection.
Surface	Non-slip, firm and without loose materials.

Additional requirements:

- Handrails must be provided on both sides.
- Handrails should have rounded ends and continuous gripping surfaces.
- The ramp must not end directly against a door without sufficient manoeuvring space.
- Provide contrasting colours at the beginning and end of the ramp.

- Install tactile warning surfaces where required to identify hazards, not indiscriminately across the ramp.
- A ramp must not be excessively long or steep.
- Where possible, provide both stairs and an accessible ramp.

4. External Wayfinding and Tactile Guidance

Objective: To enable blind and low-vision visitors to navigate independently from the parking area to the museum entrance.

Assessment criteria	Recommended standards
Directional signs	Clearly indicate the museum entrance, accessible entrance and reception.
Tactile guiding path	Continuous tactile guidance from the designated arrival point to the reception or main information desk.
Tactile paving width	Approximately 30–60 cm, depending on the selected tactile system and local standard.
Warning tactile paving	Use distinct warning patterns at hazards, crossings and decision points.
Sign height	Generally position important signs within a comfortable viewing and reading range of approximately 120–160 cm.
Colour contrast	Strong contrast between signs, lettering and backgrounds.
Lighting	Avoid glare, reflections and shadows that reduce sign visibility.

Additional requirements:

- Use internationally recognised accessibility symbols.
- Provide information in Arabic and English.
- Use raised lettering and Braille where appropriate.

- Tactile guidance must lead to meaningful destinations and must not terminate unexpectedly.
- Keep the tactile route free of obstacles.

PART 2 – MUSEUM ENTRANCE AND RECEPTION

5. Main Museum Entrance

Objective: To ensure that all visitors can enter the museum independently, safely and comfortably.

Assessment criteria	Recommended dimensions
Main entrance clear opening	Minimum 90 cm recommended; 100–120 cm preferred.
Automatic sliding doors	Preferred for independent access.
Door handle height	Approximately 85–110 cm.
Door operating force	Should be minimal and compliant with applicable accessibility standards.
Threshold	Flush threshold preferred; avoid raised door thresholds.
Entrance circulation area	Minimum 150 × 150 cm clear manoeuvring space.
Entrance mat	Firm, securely fixed and flush with the surrounding floor.
Glass doors	Clearly marked with contrasting visual bands at approximately 90–100 cm and 140–160 cm.
Lighting	Even lighting without glare or reflections.

Additional requirements:

- Revolving doors must not be the only available entrance.

- Provide a level entrance or an accessible ramp.
- Ensure that security gates and turnstiles allow wheelchair passage.
- Install tactile and visual entrance identification.
- Provide a clearly identified accessible entrance if the main entrance cannot be made accessible.

6. Reception and Visitor Information Desk

Objective: To ensure that visitors with different disabilities can receive information and assistance comfortably.

Assessment criteria	Recommended dimensions
Accessible counter height	75–85 cm.
Counter knee clearance height	Minimum 70 cm.
Knee clearance depth	Minimum 50 cm; preferably 60 cm.
Accessible counter width	Minimum 90 cm of usable lowered counter space.
Clear approach space	Minimum 150 × 150 cm.
Reception circulation width	Minimum 150 cm.
Information display height	Main information should be within approximately 90–160 cm.

Additional requirements:

- At least one section of the reception desk must be wheelchair accessible.
- Staff must be able to communicate with visitors seated at wheelchair height.
- Provide written information for Deaf visitors.
- Provide hearing enhancement systems, such as an induction loop, where appropriate.

- Provide large-print museum information and Braille information.
- Staff must be trained to communicate respectfully with people with disabilities.
- Avoid placing glass partitions that prevent effective communication or obscure facial expressions.

7. Ticketing and Payment Counters

Assessment criteria	Recommended dimensions
Accessible ticket counter height	75–85 cm.
Knee clearance	Minimum 70 cm high.
Clear floor space	Minimum 150 × 150 cm.
Queue pathway width	Minimum 120 cm; preferably 150 cm.
Ticket machine controls	Approximately 90–120 cm above floor level.
Touchscreen operating area	Accessible from a seated position.

Additional requirements:

- Provide an accessible ticket purchase and payment point.
- Payment terminals must be easy to reach from a wheelchair.
- Provide visual and written instructions.
- Provide staff assistance without requiring visitors to disclose unnecessary personal information.
- Allow priority access where appropriate.

8. General Signage and Information Boards

Assessment criteria	Recommended standards
Sign language	Use clear pictograms and universally recognised symbols.

Main sign lettering	Large, readable, high-contrast lettering.
Text height	Approximately 2–5 cm depending on viewing distance.
Braille	Provide Braille for essential permanent identification and directional information.
Raised lettering	Provide tactile characters on essential signs.
Sign positioning	Approximately 120–160 cm for frequently used information, adjusted for the type of sign.
Contrast	High contrast between text and background.
Language	Arabic and English.

Additional requirements:

- Signage should use consistent symbols throughout the museum.
- Avoid excessive information on one board.
- Use simple language and short sentences.
- Provide a visual museum map at the entrance.
- Provide an accessible digital map, where possible.
- Important signs should not be hidden behind doors or furniture.

PART 3 – INTERNAL MUSEUM ACCESSIBILITY

9. Internal Corridors and Circulation Areas

Objective: To allow wheelchair users, visitors with walking difficulties and blind visitors to move freely throughout the museum.

Assessment criteria	**Recommended dimensions**
Main corridors	Minimum 150 cm; preferably 180 cm.

Secondary corridors	Minimum 120 cm, where permitted by local regulations.
Wheelchair turning space	Minimum 150 cm diameter.
Passing spaces	Minimum 150 × 150 cm.
Door clear opening	Minimum 90 cm recommended.
Corridor head clearance	Minimum 210 cm.
Protruding objects	Must not create hazards for blind or low-vision visitors.
Floor surface	Firm, stable, level and slip-resistant.

Additional requirements:

- No display stands, chairs or exhibition objects should obstruct accessible circulation.
- Provide adequate space for two wheelchair users to pass wherever possible.
- Avoid sharp corners and protruding display structures.
- Maintain a continuous tactile guidance system for blind visitors.
- Ensure that emergency exit routes are accessible and clearly identified.

10. Museum Flooring and Surface Materials

Objective: To minimise slipping, tripping and navigation difficulties.

Assessment criteria	**Recommended standards**
Floor material	Non-slip porcelain, stone, vinyl or other suitable materials.
Slip resistance	Use a tested slip-resistant finish suitable for the expected dry and wet conditions.
Floor level	Smooth and even, without unexpected level changes.
Floor joints	Narrow, flush and properly finished.

Carpets	Firm, low-pile carpeting, securely fixed to the floor.
Floor colour	Provide sufficient contrast at important transitions.
Reflective flooring	Avoid highly polished surfaces that create glare or confusing reflections.
Drainage	Floors must not accumulate water.

Additional requirements:

- Avoid loose rugs and floor mats.
- Avoid highly patterned floors that may cause visual confusion or sensory discomfort.
- Avoid abrupt changes in floor colour that could be perceived as steps or holes.
- Provide contrasting stair nosings and clear identification of level changes.

11. Exhibition Display Cases and Artefact Heights

Objective: To ensure that visitors using wheelchairs, children, older adults and visitors with visual impairments can view museum collections comfortably.

Assessment criteria	**Recommended dimensions**
General viewing height	Approximately 75–150 cm above floor level.
Frequently viewed artefacts	Preferably between 80–130 cm.
Wall-mounted displays	Lower edges should be approximately 70 cm or lower where needed to allow wheelchair approach and cane detection.
Accessible display approach	Provide at least 90 cm clear approach width; 150 cm turning space where necessary.

Wheelchair viewing distance	Allow visitors to approach closely without obstruction.
Display case depth	Keep cases shallow enough for seated visitors to see objects.
Interactive displays	Provide controls within approximately 80–120 cm.

Additional requirements:

- Important objects should be visible from both standing and seated positions.
- Avoid placing essential objects too high.
- Avoid display cases that require visitors to stand for long periods.
- Provide seating near exhibitions.
- Where original objects cannot be touched, provide tactile replicas or 3D models.
- Provide appropriate protective barriers without obstructing wheelchair viewing.
- Ensure that display cases do not create hazards for visitors using white canes.

12. Exhibition Labels and Information Panels

Objective: To ensure that exhibition descriptions and historical information are accessible to visitors with physical, visual, hearing and cognitive disabilities.

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Assessment criteria	**Recommended dimensions**
Label reading height	Approximately 90–120 cm for frequently used labels.
Main information panel height	Approximately 90–160 cm.
Angled information panels	Tilt approximately 30–45 degrees from horizontal where appropriate.
Viewing distance	Allow close viewing without obstructing the pathway.

Large-print text	Preferably 18–24 pt for key information, adjusted to viewing distance.
Main exhibition headings	Approximately 24–36 pt or larger.
Line spacing	Approximately 1.2–1.5 times the font size.
Text contrast	High contrast, preferably dark text on a light matte background.
Font	Clear, simple sans-serif typeface.

Additional requirements:

- Information must be available in Arabic and English.
- Avoid placing text directly over photographs or complicated backgrounds.
- Use short paragraphs and simple sentence structures.
- Provide alternative formats for essential information.
- Avoid excessive text that requires visitors to stand for long periods.
- Provide QR codes linking to accessible digital descriptions, but never make QR codes the only means of accessing information.

13. Angled Information Panels for Wheelchair Users

This is an important item to assess separately.

The museum should provide angled reading panels that enable wheelchair users to read information without bending forward excessively or experiencing neck strain.

Recommended specifications:

- Reading surface height: approximately 75–90 cm.
- Panel inclination: approximately 30–45 degrees from horizontal.
- Accessible knee clearance: minimum 70 cm high.
- Knee clearance depth: minimum 50–60 cm.

- Clear floor space: approximately 90 × 120 cm, with sufficient additional space for turning.
- Text should be positioned within comfortable seated viewing distance.
- The panel must not protrude into the circulation route.

14. Seating and Rest Areas

Objective: To support older adults, visitors with mobility impairments, people with fatigue and visitors who need regular rest.

Assessment criteria	Recommended dimensions
Standard seat height	45–48 cm.
Seat depth	40–45 cm.
Backrest	Preferably provided.
Armrests	Recommended to support standing and sitting.
Seat width	Approximately 45–55 cm.
Wheelchair companion space	Minimum 90 × 120 cm clear space beside seating.
Seating intervals	Provide seating at regular intervals, preferably every 30–50 metres.

Additional requirements:

- Provide lightweight portable stools that visitors can carry and use when needed.
- Provide folding or lightweight chairs for older visitors.
- Provide seats with armrests and back support.
- Provide resting areas throughout the exhibition galleries.
- Avoid placing seating in a way that blocks tactile pathways.
- Provide some seating away from loud or crowded exhibition areas.

15. Wheelchairs and Mobility Assistance Equipment

Objective: To ensure that visitors who do not have their own mobility equipment can access the museum.

Assessment criteria:

- Provide a sufficient number of manual wheelchairs at the main entrance.
- Provide lightweight wheelchairs that are easy to manoeuvre.
- Provide portable walking aids or lightweight seating stools where feasible.
- Ensure that all wheelchairs are maintained and inspected regularly.
- Provide a clear wheelchair borrowing and return procedure.
- Staff should be available to assist visitors when requested.
- Ensure that wheelchair users can access all public exhibition areas.

Recommended equipment:

- Standard manual wheelchairs.
- Lightweight wheelchairs.
- Portable folding stools.
- Walking sticks available for temporary loan, where appropriate.
- Accessible museum maps and communication aids.

PART 4 – ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

16. Braille and Tactile Information

Objective: To allow blind and low-vision visitors to understand the museum environment and exhibition content independently.

Assessment criteria:

1. Provide Braille labels for essential exhibition identification and information.
2. Provide raised lettering on important signs.
3. Provide tactile maps showing the museum layout.

4. Provide tactile models or replicas of selected artefacts.
5. Provide Braille information at reception.
6. Provide Braille or tactile floor identification at elevators.
7. Provide accessible directional signs.
8. Ensure that tactile information is positioned consistently and can be reached comfortably.

Recommended technical standards:

Element	Recommended dimensions
Main tactile information position	Approximately 90–120 cm above floor level, depending on the sign type.
Braille character size	Follow the applicable Braille standard, such as ISO 17049.
Raised lettering	Follow recognised tactile signage requirements.
Tactile maps	Install at a comfortable seated and standing reading position.
Tactile model height	Approximately 75–100 cm where appropriate.

17. Audio Guides for Blind Visitors

Objective: To enable visitors with visual impairments to experience the museum collections through sound.

Assessment criteria:

- Provide recorded audio descriptions of important artefacts.
- Explain the shape, size, colour, material and historical significance of each object.
- Describe the location of objects within exhibition spaces.
- Provide audio descriptions in Arabic and English.
- Provide headphones or personal listening devices.
- Provide accessible audio guide controls.

- Ensure that audio guides are easy to operate independently.
- Provide an option for staff-assisted guided tours.
- Offer audio navigation or orientation information where possible.

Recommended enhancement: Provide NFC or accessible audio guide activation points near selected exhibits, with tactile identification.

18. Lighting for Visitors with Visual Impairments

Objective: To provide adequate visibility while protecting sensitive museum collections.

Area	Recommended illumination
General circulation areas	Approximately 100–200 lux.
Reception and ticketing	Approximately 200–300 lux.
General exhibition areas	Approximately 100–200 lux, depending on collection requirements.
Reading and interpretation panels	Approximately 200–300 lux where conservation permits.
Stairs and level changes	Consistent, glare-free illumination.
Tactile information areas	Adequate lighting to identify the information.

Additional requirements:

- Avoid direct glare.
- Avoid strong reflections on glass display cases.
- Avoid sudden changes between very bright and very dark rooms.
- Provide clear visual contrast between floors, walls and doors.
- Use consistent lighting to support visitors with low vision.
- Ensure that lighting levels are compatible with conservation requirements for sensitive artefacts and manuscripts.

19. Tactile Guidance System (Tactile Paving)

Assessment criteria:

- Install guiding tactile paving from the main accessible entrance to reception.
- Extend tactile guidance to major exhibition areas and visitor facilities.
- Use warning tactile paving before stairs, hazardous edges and other relevant hazards.
- Ensure tactile indicators are securely fixed and do not create tripping hazards.
- Ensure the tactile route is continuous and logically connected.
- Avoid placing furniture or temporary displays on the tactile path.

The tactile system must comply with the relevant local technical standards and should be designed by an accessibility specialist.

PART 5 – ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

20. Sign Language and Visual Communication

Objective: To ensure that Deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors can access all museum information and services.

Assessment criteria:

- Provide information videos with Arabic Sign Language interpretation.
- Provide subtitles for all exhibition videos.
- Provide written transcripts of audio content.
- Provide visual announcements for important messages.
- Provide staff trained in basic or professional Arabic Sign Language.
- Provide sign language interpretation for scheduled guided tours and events.
- Provide a visual communication system at reception.
- Provide digital communication options, such as text-based assistance.
- Provide induction loop systems in suitable reception, auditorium and lecture areas.

Technical recommendations:

Element	Recommended standards
Subtitles	Available throughout all audiovisual content.
Sign language video	Clear, sufficiently large and properly illuminated interpreter window.
Information screens	Positioned at comfortable viewing height, approximately 100–160 cm.
Visual alarms	Installed alongside audible alarms.
Hearing loop	Available at designated service counters and event spaces.
Written information	Available for all essential spoken announcements.

Additional requirements:

- Ensure that the interpreter's face and hands are clearly visible.
- Avoid placing important text over the sign language interpreter.
- Provide good lighting on staff members' faces to support lip-reading.
- Staff should face visitors when communicating.
- Avoid communicating while facing away or covering the mouth.

PART 6 – ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM AND SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFERENCES

21. Sensory Room / Quiet Room for Visitors with Autism

Highly recommended

Objective: To provide a safe, quiet and comfortable space for visitors who experience sensory overload, anxiety or difficulty processing environmental stimulation.

Recommended specifications:

Assessment criteria	Recommended standards

Room area	Approximately 12–20 m^2 as a starting design allowance; increase according to expected occupancy.
Door clear width	Minimum 90 cm.
Turning space	Minimum 150 cm diameter.
Lighting	Adjustable, dimmable lighting.
Wall colours	Neutral, calming colours.
Sound insulation	Reduce noise transmission from adjacent galleries.
Seating	Soft seating, beanbags and supportive chairs.
Temperature	Comfortable and independently controllable where possible.
Floor surface	Soft, stable, non-slip and easy to clean.
Visual stimulation	Minimal, with no unnecessary flashing or moving displays.

Recommended sensory resources:

- Noise-cancelling headphones or ear defenders.
- Sensory toys and tactile objects.
- Weighted blankets, subject to individual preference and safe use.
- Soft cushions.
- Adjustable lighting.
- Visual communication cards.
- Emotion and feeling cards.
- A quiet reading corner.
- A small number of semi-enclosed spaces for visitors who prefer privacy.

Additional requirements:

- The room should be clearly identified on the museum map.

- It should be available without unnecessary procedures or complicated booking requirements.
- Visitors should be able to use the room with a companion.
- The room should not be used as a storage room or staff office.
- Provide a clear route from the exhibition galleries to the sensory room.

22. Sensory-Friendly Exhibition Design

Objective: To reduce sensory overload and make exhibitions more comfortable for autistic visitors.

Assessment criteria:

Lighting

- Avoid flashing lights.
- Avoid rapidly changing lighting effects.
- Avoid excessive brightness.
- Avoid sudden transitions from bright to dark areas.
- Provide calm lighting options where possible.

Sound

- Avoid unnecessarily loud sound effects.
- Provide advance warnings about noisy exhibitions.
- Provide headphones or ear defenders.
- Reduce unnecessary background music.
- Provide quiet visiting hours.

Colours and Visual Design

- Avoid excessive use of bright, contrasting patterns.
- Avoid visually cluttered exhibition walls.
- Use consistent colour schemes.

- Provide clear visual organisation.

Exhibition Content

- Use simple and predictable information.
- Provide visual schedules and exhibition maps.
- Explain interactive activities before visitors participate.
- Provide a clear beginning and end to exhibition routes.
- Avoid unexpected interactive sounds or movements.

23. Autism-Friendly Visitor Information

Assessment criteria:

- Provide a social story explaining what visitors can expect during their visit.
- Provide a visual guide showing the entrance, ticketing process, galleries, toilets and exit.
- Provide sensory maps identifying noisy, bright or crowded areas.
- Provide information about expected waiting times.
- Provide quiet visiting hours or sensory-friendly sessions.
- Allow visitors to take breaks whenever necessary.
- Train staff to recognise signs of sensory overload and respond calmly.

A particularly useful measure is to publish a downloadable sensory guide before the visit so families can prepare in advance.

PART 7 – HIDDEN DISABILITIES AND STAFF TRAINING

24. Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme

Objective: To recognize visitors with non-visible disabilities who may require additional time, assistance, patience or understanding.

Assessment criteria:

- Display information about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme at reception.

- Offer Sunflower lanyards or stickers to visitors who wish to use them.
- Train employees to recognise the sunflower symbol.
- Ensure that staff understand that not all disabilities are visible.
- Provide priority assistance when requested.
- Allow additional time for communication and service.
- Avoid asking visitors to prove their disability unnecessarily.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of all visitors.

Examples of hidden disabilities include:

- Autism.
- ADHD.
- Hearing impairments.
- Chronic fatigue.
- Cognitive disabilities.
- Neurological conditions.
- Sensory processing difficulties.

Important: Wearing the sunflower symbol must be voluntary. Visitors must not be required to wear it to receive assistance.

25. Staff Disability Awareness and Training

Objective: To ensure that museum employees can provide appropriate, respectful and effective support.

Assessment criteria:

Training area	Required staff competency
Physical disabilities	Understand wheelchair access and safe assistance techniques.
Visual impairments	Know how to guide blind visitors and describe the environment.

Hearing impairments	Basic Arabic Sign Language and effective written communication.
Autism	Understand sensory overload and appropriate communication.
Hidden disabilities	Recognise the Sunflower symbol and respond appropriately.
Emergency assistance	Know how to assist visitors with different disabilities during evacuation.
Customer service	Communicate respectfully and ask before providing physical assistance.

Recommended training programme:

- Initial disability awareness training for all customer-facing employees.
- Practical wheelchair assistance training.
- Basic Arabic Sign Language training.
- Visual impairment awareness and sighted-guide techniques.
- Autism and sensory awareness training.
- Emergency evacuation training.
- Periodic refresher training.

The museum should maintain records of employee training and review staff competency regularly.

PART 8 – ADDITIONAL ACCESSIBILITY FACILITIES

26. Elevators and Vertical Circulation

Objective: To ensure that visitors can access all public floors of the museum.

Assessment criteria	**Recommended dimensions**
Elevator provision	At least one accessible elevator where public facilities are located on multiple floors.

Elevator cabin	Minimum 110 × 140 cm is a useful design target; verify against the applicable code and wheelchair requirements.
Door clear width	Minimum 90 cm recommended.
Button height	Approximately 90–120 cm.
Handrail height	Approximately 85 cm.
Turning space	Provide appropriate manoeuvring space outside the elevator.
Braille buttons	Required on accessible elevator controls under applicable standards.
Audible floor announcements	Provide audible floor identification.
Visual floor indicators	Provide visible floor numbers and direction indicators.
Emergency communication	Provide accessible two-way communication, including visual alternatives.

Additional requirements:

- The elevator must connect all public floors.
- Controls must be reachable from a seated position.
- Provide tactile and Braille identification.
- Provide audible and visual arrival signals.
- Ensure that the elevator has sufficient space for a wheelchair user and companion.
- Escalators must never be considered a replacement for an accessible elevator.

27. Accessible Toilets

Objective: To provide independent and dignified toilet access for visitors with mobility disabilities.

Assessment criteria	Recommended dimensions
Wheelchair turning space	Minimum 150 cm diameter.
Door clear width	Minimum 90 cm recommended.
Toilet seat height	Approximately 45–48 cm.
Grab rails	Install beside and behind the toilet as required by the layout.
Grab rail height	Approximately 75–85 cm.
Accessible washbasin height	Approximately 80–85 cm.
Knee clearance below basin	Minimum 70 cm.
Mirror	Lower edge preferably around 90 cm or below, depending on mirror design.
Door lock and accessories	Within comfortable reach, generally 90–120 cm.
Emergency alarm	Accessible emergency pull cord or equivalent system.

Additional requirements:

- Provide an accessible toilet on every public floor where toilets are provided, subject to local regulations.
- Ensure that the door can be opened easily.
- Provide sufficient space for wheelchair transfer.
- Ensure grab rails are securely installed.
- Provide accessible signage with tactile identification and Braille.
- Provide an emergency call system reachable from both the toilet and floor level.
- Provide accessible washroom facilities for visitors with different needs.

28. Accessible Prayer Room (Musalla)

Objective: To enable visitors with physical disabilities and older adults to perform prayers comfortably.

Assessment criteria:

- Provide a step-free route to the prayer room.
- Provide an accessible entrance.
- Provide sufficient wheelchair manoeuvring space of at least 150 cm diameter.
- Provide designated wheelchair spaces within the prayer hall.
- Provide chairs for visitors who cannot kneel or perform floor-based prayer movements.
- Provide non-slip flooring.
- Use low-pile carpeting.
- Ensure that prayer rows allow wheelchair users to participate without obstructing other worshippers.
- Provide clear signage and directional information.
- Ensure adequate lighting.
- Provide an accessible route to the ablution area.
- Provide a quiet and comfortable environment.

29. Accessible Ablution Area (Wud)

Assessment criteria	**Recommended dimensions**
Accessible approach space	Minimum 120 cm clear space.
Washbasin or washing surface	Approximately 80–85 cm high where applicable.
Support rails	Approximately 70–80 cm high.

Seating height	Approximately 45–48 cm.
Wheelchair turning space	Minimum 150 cm diameter.
Controls and accessories	Generally 70–120 cm above floor level.

Additional requirements:

- Provide at least one accessible ablution station.
- Provide a seated ablution option.
- Provide grab rails and appropriate support.
- Ensure that the floor is slip-resistant.
- Provide proper drainage to prevent standing water.
- Provide accessible taps and controls.
- Ensure that visitors can reach the washing area independently or with assistance.

30. Museum Café and Restaurant

Objective: To ensure that visitors with disabilities can access dining services independently.

Assessment criteria	Recommended dimensions
Accessible circulation route	Minimum 120 cm; preferably 150 cm.
Wheelchair turning space	Minimum 150 cm diameter.
Accessible table height	Approximately 75–80 cm.
Knee clearance	Minimum 70 cm high.
Knee clearance depth	Minimum 50–60 cm.
Accessible service counter	Approximately 75–85 cm high.
Table approach space	Allow sufficient clear space for wheelchair access.

Additional requirements:

- Provide wheelchair-accessible tables.
- Ensure that tables are not too close together.
- Provide chairs with armrests.
- Provide large-print menus.
- Provide digital menus compatible with screen readers.
- Provide written menus for Deaf visitors.
- Use clear pictograms and allergen information.
- Avoid excessive background music and noise.
- Ensure the café is accessible from the main exhibition route.
- Provide accessible toilets nearby.

PART 9 – OUTDOOR EXHIBITIONS AND GARDENS

31. Outdoor Exhibition Accessibility

Objective: To ensure that outdoor museum exhibits, sculptures, historical structures and archaeological displays are accessible to visitors with all types of disabilities.

Assessment criteria:

Assessment criteria	Recommended dimensions
Outdoor pathways	Minimum 150 cm; preferably 180 cm.
Passing areas	Minimum 150 × 150 cm.
Path gradient	Preferably not more than 5%.
Ramp gradient	Follow the ramp requirements in Section 3.
Outdoor exhibit viewing height	Approximately 75–150 cm where applicable.

Resting areas	Seating approximately every 30–50 metres.
Accessible route	Continuous connection to all major outdoor exhibits.
Surface	Firm, stable and slip-resistant.
Lighting	Adequate illumination for evening visits.
Signage	High-contrast, tactile and accessible information.

Additional requirements:

- Outdoor exhibits must be connected by accessible pathways.
- Avoid loose gravel, deep sand and uneven stone surfaces.
- Provide ramps where there are changes in level.
- Provide tactile information and audio descriptions.
- Provide shaded seating areas.
- Provide accessible water fountains where available.
- Ensure that outdoor display labels are readable from seated positions.
- Provide accessible routes around sculptures and large artefacts.
- Ensure that temporary outdoor exhibitions follow the same accessibility requirements.

PART 10 – EMERGENCY ACCESSIBILITY AND EVACUATION

32. Emergency Exits and Evacuation Procedures

Objective: To ensure that visitors with disabilities can evacuate the museum safely during emergencies.

Assessment criteria:

- Emergency exits must be clearly identified using visual signage.
- Provide audible and visual fire alarm systems.
- Flashing visual alarms must be installed where required for Deaf visitors.

- Provide tactile and high-contrast emergency signage.
- Emergency routes must remain free from obstacles.
- Provide accessible evacuation routes.
- Provide designated refuge areas where required by the building's fire strategy.
- Provide emergency evacuation chairs where appropriate.
- Train staff to assist wheelchair users and visitors with visual, hearing and cognitive disabilities.
- Develop individual evacuation assistance procedures where necessary.
- Ensure that emergency announcements are available visually and audibly.
- Conduct regular evacuation drills involving disability scenarios.

Recommended measurements:

Element	Recommended standard
Emergency route width	Minimum 120 cm, subject to fire regulations and occupancy.
Emergency door clear width	Minimum 90 cm recommended.
Refuge area	Designed according to the approved fire and life safety strategy.
Signage	High-contrast, illuminated and clearly visible.
Emergency controls	Within accessible reach where applicable.

PART 11 – FINAL MUSEUM ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT FORM

I recommend using the following scoring system when conducting the actual museum inspection.

33. Evaluation and Scoring Method

Score Evaluation

0	Not available / Completely inaccessible
1	Available but does not meet accessibility requirements
2	Partially accessible
3	Meets the recommended accessibility requirements
4	Fully accessible with additional inclusive features
N/A	Not applicable to the museum

For each criterion, record:

- Actual measured dimensions in centimetres.
- Required dimensions.
- Compliance status.
- Photographic evidence.
- Observations and recommendations.
- Corrective actions required.

Accessibility category	**What should be evaluated**
Physical Accessibility	Parking, ramps, entrances, corridors, elevators, toilets and exhibition heights.
Visual Accessibility	Braille, tactile pathways, audio guides, lighting and tactile models.
Hearing Accessibility	Sign language, subtitles, induction loops and visual announcements.
Autism and Hidden Disabilities	Sensory rooms, quiet spaces, sensory-friendly exhibitions, sunflower identification and staff training.

This distinction is important because a museum may be fully accessible to wheelchair users but remain inaccessible to blind visitors, Deaf visitors or autistic visitors.

One further recommendation: Include people with disabilities themselves in the inspection process. Invite wheelchair users, blind and low-vision visitors, Deaf visitors and autistic people to test the museum facilities. A technically compliant building does not necessarily guarantee a comfortable, independent and inclusive visitor experience.

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