

Galway City Museum

Spanish Parade, Galway

Education Policy

2016-2020

1. Introduction & Context

1.1 Introduction

This Education Policy is a framework for the future development of the educational offer at Galway City Museum for the period 2016-2020; it is the first such policy developed by the Museum. The adoption and implementation of this policy by the management of Galway City Council is a requirement of the Heritage Council's Museum's Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI).

1.2 History & Context

Established in 1971, Galway City Museum originally occupied Comerford House, the former home and studio of artist Clare Sheridan (1885-1970), adjacent to the Spanish Arch. The Museum began with a residual collection of medieval stones from the city, acquired by Sheridan. Over the years, under the curatorship of Etienne Rynne, Michael Keane, Bill Scanlan and Jim Higgins, the Museum built up a general folk life, industrial and militia collection, mainly through the donation of objects. The Museum at Comerford House closed in 2004. Between 1976 and 2004, there was no dedicated staff member with specific responsibility for education and, as far as can be established, no structured education programme.

A new, purpose-built museum was opened in 2006, to the rear of the Spanish Arch, replacing the old Comerford House museum. At this time, in recognition of the core role of education, Galway City Council appointed a full-time Education Officer (EO). From the outset, the EO organised events and activities, provided guided tours, developed activity sheets, and facilitated external groups who wished to use the museum's spaces for events.

Appointed in November 2013, the current EO holds BA and MA degrees in Heritage Studies (GMIT, 2002 & 2004) and an MA in Museum Practice & Management (UU, 2012) and has worked in heritage education at GMIT (Galway), Glenveagh National Park (Co. Donegal) and the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life (Co. Mayo). In addition, the EO has completed several training courses run by Heritage Council, British Library, etc.

A full-time Education-Exhibitions Assistant was appointed in 2016.

At present, the EO is supported by a graduate intern who delivers guided tours and deals with event bookings and space setup. It is envisaged that a full-time Education/Exhibitions Assistant will be appointed to Galway City Museum by the end of 2016.

In 2019, the Museum developed three four-month programmes of events.

With approximately 100 events per annum, the programme caters for a variety of audiences (Age 7+, Teens, Adults, Families, All Ages, etc.) and comprises illustrated talks, workshops, art classes, evening lectures, etc. which relate to the museum's collections and the themes of the exhibitions, both permanent and temporary. Some of these events are

podcast/vodcast and afterwards made available online. The programme also features events to mark important anniversaries in the history of Galway and other to tie in with local, national and international events/festivals, such as National Drawing Day, Galway Fringe Festival, GIAF, Heritage Week, Culture Night, International Uilleann Piping Day, Galway Science & Technology Festival, etc. Almost all events are free of charge. As events are generally date/time specific and require advance booking they are primarily attended by a local audience, though some attendees are passing through the museum and happen upon the events. Event evaluation forms are utilised to garner feedback.

Apart from scheduling activities and events, the EO facilitates guided tours (general and special focus); provides outreach services to schools and community/active retirement/special interest groups; coordinates school projects; programmes external talks/workshops; and develops activity sheets and support material for exhibitions. The EO also, as opportunities arise, records oral histories, manages the *Mo Ghailimh Féin / My Own Galway* website, run by the National Museum of Ireland, and coordinates the museum's Senior Cultural Volunteer Programme.

In 2015, the cost of the education programme was approximately €14,500, which included facilitators fees (plus travel and overnight where applicable), oral history recordings, podcasts/vodcasts, as well as the design and print of programme and posters, which accounts for about €4,000 of the total.

In 2015, Galway City Museum took 71 guided tour bookings for 1,848 individuals and 8 self-guided visit bookings for 370 individuals. From January to July 2016, the Museum took 47 guided tour bookings for 1,057 individuals and 89 self-guided visit bookings for 3,329 individuals. There is currently no charge for guided tours.

The Museum has a designated Education Room, which can cater for about 30 people in a lecture-style setting or a dozen people around tables. The space has an in-built projector and a lectern for presentations. Apart from museum events, the Education Room is offered to outside groups and organisations as a space to hold talks, meetings, workshops, classes, etc. Other museum spaces are made available to groups/organisations for performances, launches, etc. The EO manages the booking of museum spaces, including the courtyard.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galway is a busy, vibrant, diverse and popular destination • Loyal local audience • Large visitor numbers to museum, c. 225,000 in 2019 • Dedicated Education Officer & Education-Exhibitions Assistant • Good volunteers • Dedicated Education Room (with projector, podium, tables, chairs, etc.) • Healthy Education Budget • Free museum with free events • Expertise and experience of museum staff • Established and popular events programme • Relationship with Pure Skill (sports and leisure activity centre), bringing in school tour business • Galway is a city with many facilitators available for events: academics, local historians, craftspeople, artists, musicians, researchers, etc. • Strong local relationships with GMIT, NUIG, Galway Music Residency, RealSim, local historians, etc. • Good relationship with cultural institutions: NMI, NGI, NLI, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Room is somewhat small • Lack of large space in galleries for performances, launches, etc. • Lack of awareness/relationship/recognition with local schools/community groups • Little on offer for U-7s • Low secondary school numbers • No Wi-Fi • No dedicated education bookings/marketing/finance person, so EO manages all aspects of c. 100 in-house events per annum • Working in isolation, with no other nearby museums offering education services • No bus parking or drop-off • No bag/coat facilities for large groups • No lunch room to facilitate large school groups • Small number of museum staff means EO's time is divided between education and research/exhibition/curatorial work, hence an over-reliance on external facilitators and little-to-no time to devote to developing education support for exhibitions or educational projects
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to New Communities • Local primary schools: 32 schools in the city with almost 8,000 pupils¹ • Development of Education Packs • Development of curriculum-led activities/programmes • Develop tour guiding programme • Appointment of Education/Exhibitions Assistant • Charging for certain events (evening lectures) to make them cost neutral • Development of off-site tours (e.g. Claddagh) • Development of Museum Courtyard as a covered space, thus allowing for larger weather independent events • Use of technology, social media & website • Ireland 1916:2016, ECoC 2020 & Wild Atlantic Way, and associated funding opportunities • Introduction of guided tour evaluation/feedback forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Covid-19 epidemic in 2020 • 'Event fatigue' in Galway City due to over-saturation of events in 2020 (Galway 2020) • Competition from other event organisers (festivals, etc.) • Inability to meet demand generated by museum's success

¹ <http://www schooldays.ie/primary-schools-in-ireland/primary-Galway-City>

2. Mission & Education Mission of Galway City Museum

2.1 Mission of Galway City Museum

“To be a centre of learning, inspiration, engagement & enrichment for all our visitors by collecting, preserving & displaying the material heritage of Galway City.”

2.2 Education Mission of Galway City Museum

Adopted in 2012, the Education Mission of Galway City Museum was developed in conjunction with and agreed by museum staff.

“To enable and encourage the public (through the range of services it provides) to seek their own level of understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the history and heritage of Galway and beyond”.

3. Aims & Objectives

Aim 1: Continue to deliver 6-monthly (Jan. to June & July to Dec.) events programme and guided tours							
Objectives		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Extra Resources
1.1	Create learning opportunities by developing a varied education programme for variety of audiences reflecting collections, exhibitions and historical anniversaries, and linking with local/national festivals	x	x	x	x	x	N/A
1.2	Through stakeholder and public input through consultation process, ensure education programmes/facilities are accessible to all in a socially inclusive manner		x		x		N/A
1.3	Continue to provide guided tours (as resources permit)	x	x	x	x	x	N/A
1.4	Review/evaluate events/tours	x	x	x	x	x	N/A

Aim 2: Develop connections with local communities, including new communities, through outreach projects							
Objectives		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Extra Resources
2.1	Identify, make contact with and build relationships with local communities, including new communities, assessing needs and identifying barriers		x	x	x	x	
2.2	Develop awareness of museum and its educational offer through outreach		x	x	x	x	
2.3	Develop outreach plan		x				
2.4	Develop & deliver projects		x	x	x		

Aim 3: Develop curriculum-led schools programmes/tours							
Objectives		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Extra Resources
3.1	Review primary/post primary curricula & liaise with primary/post primary teachers to assess how the museum might help them with their teaching			x			
3.2	Develop & deliver programmes/tours (incorporating a wide range of learning styles including visual/spatial, bodily/kinaesthetic and verbal/linguistic styles)			x	x	x	

Aim 4: Develop educational material for permanent/semi-permanent exhibitions							
Objectives		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Extra Resources
4.1	Develop child-friendly object labels – written by and for children			x			
4.2	Develop activity sheets – theme/exhibition specific			x	x		
4.3	Develop a teacher's education pack to send to primary and post-primary schools in Galway City			x			

Aim 5: Develop networks and partnerships with other museums and educational organisations to promote best practice							
Objectives		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Extra Resources
5.1	Develop relationships with Education Departments of the National Cultural Institutions, regional and local museums		x	x	x	x	
5.2	Attend Annual IMA Conference (spring) & Education & Outreach Forum (July)		x	x	x	x	
5.3	Examine with others museum/heritage educators the possibility of establishing Western Museum Educators Network to share regional and international best practice through the exchange of information, resource, and training			x			

Aim 6: Develop an accessible education/learning platform including digital, 2/3-D, aural, visual, multimedia, etc.							
Objectives		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Extra Resources
6.1	Use <i>Mo Ghailimh Féin / My Own Galway</i> and Galway City Museum websites as an output for the past exhibitions and educational projects (podcasts, vodcasts, oral history, summer camps films, articles, photographs, research, etc.)		x	x	x	x	
6.2	Encourage public to contribute material (articles, stories, photos, oral history, etc.) relating to the history/heritage of Galway			x	x	x	

4. Identification of Target Audiences

Formal Learning Audiences

- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- Post Leaving Cert (PLC)
- Third Level (NUIG, GMIT)
- Adult Education
- DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)
- Teachers/Educators
- Participants at Museum Events / Museum Outreach
- Historical/Archaeological Societies & Groups
- Arts/Heritage Community
- Language Schools
- External Researchers (local history, museum objects, etc.)
- Disability Groups
- Object Donors (& their family members)
- Social/Ethnic Minority Groups, including Irish Travellers
- Irish Language (& other minority language) Speakers

Informal Learning Audiences

- Families
- Children
- Teens
- Adults

- Senior Citizens
- Local Community, including new communities/new Irish
- Tourists (domestic & international)
- Staff of Galway City Council
- Kitchen Café Customers

5. Type of Provision

Galway City Museum has worked assiduously to create a varied educational programme to facilitate the wide-ranging learning needs of both our formal and informal audiences. Details of the educational programming and activities currently on offer at the museum are listed below:

Permanent/Semi-Permanent/Temporary Exhibitions

Touring Exhibitions

Galway City Museum has developed photographic exhibitions, with accompanying educational material, which are available for loan:

Home Improvements: Responding to Poverty in the West, 1891-1923
Lawrence's Galway
Aran Life by Bill Doyle

Guided Tours (on-site), general & special-focus

By prior appointment, Galway City Museum offers guided tours of its permanent / semi-permanent exhibitions and, by request, more in-depth special-interest tours. On occasion, the museum caters for groups out of hours.

Activity Sheets

An activity sheet for families/primary schools/language schools is available in English/Irish (*My Favourite Object/An Rud Is Fearr Liom*) free of charge from reception.

External Events/Festivals

Galway City Museum actively participates in a number of national and international events and festivals throughout the year by organising educational events and acting as a host venue during Seachtain na Gaeilge, Galway Food Festival, National Drawing Day, Galway Fringe Festival, GIAF, Heritage Week, Culture Night, International Uilleann Piping Day, Science Week, etc.

Outreach

By prior appointment, the EO is available to visit schools, community groups, special interest groups, active retirement groups, etc.

Launches/Openings

Galway City Museum invites the public to attend the launches of its exhibitions but also hosts cultural launches (book launches, etc.)

Bi-Annual Events Guide

Galway City Museum coordinates a bi-annual programme of events which includes illustrated talks, workshops, art classes, evening lectures, music/dance performances, film screenings, summer camps, training courses, readings, storytelling, etc. which relate to the

museum's collections and the themes of the exhibitions, both permanent and temporary. The programme also features events to mark important anniversaries in the history of Galway and to tie in with local, national and international events/festivals.

Museum Library

Galway City Museum maintains and develops a specialised library (of books relating to the museum's exhibitions/collections and the history of Galway generally) which is open to researchers and general public by appointment.

Summer/Halloween Film Camps

Film camps for teens are run during the summer months and over the Halloween break to develop communications skills, build confidence, strengthen means of self-expression, embrace local history and gain invaluable knowledge about the film industry.

Schools Projects

In conjunction with local primary schools Galway City Museum has carried out several local history/heritage projects (St Michael's, Mervue / Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh, Knocknacarra / Claddagh NS).

External Cultural Events

Galway City Museum offers its spaces, free of charge or by donation, to educational/cultural organisations for talks, lectures, workshops, performances, etc.

Primary/Post Primary Teacher's Resource Pack

To accompany its *Revolution in Galway, 1913-1923 / Réabhlóid i nGaillimh 1913-1923* exhibition, the Museum has developed a bi-lingual publication featuring the main exhibition text, which has been animated as a graphic novel, and featuring some activities for younger children.

Schools Workshops

The EO has developed two workshops for primary schools, including 'Tribal Arms', based on the Tribes of Galway and coats of arms of as non-verbal communicators

Podcasts/Vodcasts

Galway City Museum podcasts/vodcasts some of its talks/lectures and makes them available online (<https://itunes.apple.com/ie/podcast/galway-city-museum/id840449636?mt=2>). Between the 5 January 2015 and 4 January 2016, there were 21,805 iTunes downloads of Galway City Museum podcasts.

Mo Ghaillimh Féin/My Own Galway

Mo Ghaillimh Féin/My Own Galway is a sub-site/subsection of Our Irish Heritage (www.ouririshheritage.org), the home of the Irish Community Archive Network – a National Museum of Ireland project. It is a platform for sharing local history.

Research

By prior appointment, Galway City Museum facilities access to its collections for research and shares information relating to its objects

6. One-Year Action Plan (September 2016 to December 2017)²

Objectives: 1.1, 1.2 & 1.4

Tasks	Audience	Staff Responsible	Other Key Players	Target Date	Resources / Budget	Evaluation / Review
Research Programme for January to June	N/A	EO & E/EA	Director	Mid-November		Events & Facilitators Identified
Develop Programme for January to June	N/A	EO	Facilitators & Graphic Designer	Mid-December	General Education Budget	Programme developed and events guide available for Dec /Jan
Promote & Deliver Programme	General public	EO & E/EA	Event Facilitators & Marketing, Communications & Accounts Officer	Ongoing. January to June	General Education Budget	Events well promoted and booked. Events run smoothly.
Review Events/Programme	Attendees	EO	Director	Ongoing & end of June		Evaluation forms reviewed

Tasks	Audience	Staff Responsible	Other Key Players	Target Date	Resources / Budget	Evaluation / Review
Open evening(s) to consult with various stakeholders and public re. programme	General Public	EO	Marketing, Communications & Accounts Officer	Early May		Recorded feedback
Research Programme for July to Dec	N/A	EO & E/EA	Director	Mid-May		Events & Facilitators Identified
Develop Programme for July to Dec	N/A	EO	Facilitators & Graphic Designer	Mid-June	General Education Budget	Programme developed and events guide available for June /July
Promote & Deliver Programme	General Public	EO & E/EA	Event Facilitators & Marketing, Communications & Accounts Officer	Ongoing. July to December	General Education Budget	Events well promoted and booked. Events run smoothly.
Review Events/Programme	Attendees	EO	Director	Ongoing & end of December		Evaluation forms reviewed

² 15-month Action Plan from September 2016 to December 2017, and one-year thereafter.

Objectives: 1.3 & 1.4

Tasks	Audience	Staff Responsible	Other Key Players	Target Date	Resources / Budget	Evaluation / Review
Promote, book-in & deliver guided tours, as resources (staff & time) allows	All interested parties & particularly Primary Schools	EO & E/EA	Adrian Reen, Managing Director, Pure Skill & Marketing, Communications & Accounts Officer	Schools promotion with Pure Skill: Jan to March, 2017. Delivery ongoing.	Printed materials for Pure Skill for schools	No. of tours
Research & develop evaluation form for guided tours	Guided tour participants /leaders	EO		By March, 2017	Printing	Form available
Encourage completion of evaluation forms for guided tours	Guided tour participants /leaders	EO & E/EA		Ongoing from April 2017		Evaluations completed, collated
Review guided tours		EO		Ongoing & December 2017		Evaluations reviewed & summarised

Objectives 2.1:

Tasks	Audience	Staff Responsible	Other Key Players	Target Date	Resources / Budget	Evaluation / Review
Arrange a meeting with GRETB to discuss possibility of partnering on projects with communities	Adult Education & New Communities	EO	Dónal Walsh, Comm. Educ. Facilitator	Meeting: January 2017 Project: September 2017	TBC	
Send letters of introduction, offering to visit and talk to various community groups/organisations	Community groups/org anisations	EO		End of January 2017		Letters sent
Visit community groups/organisations	Community groups/org anisations	EO		February - April, 2017	Travel	Visits undertaken
Research & develop outreach plan		EO	Museum Director	End of May 2017		Outreach Plan developed & agreed

Objectives 5.1 & 5.2:

Tasks	Audience	Staff Responsible	Other Key Players	Target Date	Resources / Budget	Evaluation / Review
Attend Annual IMA Conference in Galway	N/A	EO	Director	24-26 February, 2017		Attendance
Attend Education & Outreach Forum in Dublin (July)	N/A	EO	Director	Early July 2017	T&S	Attendance
Send letters of invite to staff of other museum's/heritage centres to visit GCM	Museums/ Heritage Centres	EO & E/EA		September 2017		No. of responses/ follow-up visits arranged

Objective 6.1:

Tasks	Audience	Staff Responsible	Other Key Players	Target Date	Resources / Budget	Evaluation / Review
Collate & upload previous exhibitions (PDFs & Photos) online	Digital Media Users	EO & E/EA	Marketing, Communications & Accounts Officer	End of 2017	N/A	Past exhibition texts/images available online
Collate & upload previous education projects online (oral history, podcasts, vodcasts, etc.)	Digital Media Users	EO & E/EA	Marketing, Communications & Accounts Officer	End of 2017	N/A	Content uploaded and available online

7. Performance Indicators

The success of the educational offer at Galway City Museum is evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative performance indicators. Using research and evaluation the museum can learn about its visitors/service users and their needs, whilst identifying key areas for improvement and growth in terms of audience development and access.

7.1 Quantitative

- Number of museum events organised annually
- Number of people attending events (booking forms or head count at non-booking events)
- Number of groups / people availing of guided tours
- Number of schools visiting museum (both guided tours & self-guided visits)
- Number of outreach events over a 12-month period
- Number of activity sheets over a 12-month period
- Number of external events facilitated

7.2 Qualitative

- Event evaluation forms, using statistical analysis as well as open and close ended questions
- Feedback in visitor comment book
- Feedback from individuals, groups, schools, teachers, etc.

- Annual review of education staff training needs

8. Periodic Review of the Education Policy

8.1 Annual Review

Galway City Museum's Education Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the continual development of its education offer.³ Following the annual review, a newly-revised, one-year action plan will be developed by the Education Officer and approved by the Museum Director.

8.2 Quinquennial Review

Galway City Museum's Education Policy will be renewed on a five-year basis, with the Education Officer researching and developing the new policy. The revised policy will be reviewed by the Museum Director and, subject to approval, will be sent to Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) of Galway City Council for its approval.

³ As the Education Policy is being developed mid-year (August 2016) and the Education Programme for July to December 2016 has been developed and published, the first review will take place in December 2017.