National Museum of Ireland Volunteer Policy

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National Museum of Ireland

Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

The National Museum of Ireland (NMI) is Ireland's premier cultural institution and home to the greatest collections of Irish material heritage, culture and natural history in the world.

NMI's mission is to:

- □ Collect, preserve, promote and exhibit all examples of Ireland's portable material heritage and natural history,
- □ Interpret and promote the collections and make them accessible at home and abroad,
- □ Be the authoritative voice on the relevant aspects of Irish heritage, culture and natural history,
- □ Maintain the lead role in education, research and scholarship pertaining to the collections and their contexts.

2. Definition

A volunteer is anyone over the age of 18 who, without financial reward, performs an activity at the direction of and on behalf of NMI. NMI believes that volunteers have an important and invaluable role to play in helping NMI achieve its goals with mutual benefits for both parties. The recruitment of volunteers facilitates public access to the collections and enables greater public ownership of NMI. NMI recognises that volunteers are not recruited to replace or displace paid staff members. Instead they are recruited to complement the work of paid staff within NMI.

3. Scope

This policy relates to adults (over 18 years of age) who choose to volunteer to work in NMI. Volunteers may be interns or students who undertake a period of work experience in a workplace in order to complete a course of study or any adult offering to work for NMI without financial reward. This policy does not cover anyone who is paid to work in NMI or to children (under 18 years of age).

NMI is an equal opportunities employer, adhering to the Department of Finance 'Circular 24/2002 Diversity in the Civil Service – A Policy on Equal Opportunities' (available on Public Folders/NMI–Administration/Human Resources/Department of Finance Circulars) and will also apply these principles to its volunteer programme.

4. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework for volunteers and NMI staff to work together in a mutually supportive and complementary manner. This will in turn establish values and standards in relation to how the NMI involves volunteers in its operations and function. NMI welcomes volunteers and recognises their contribution to achieving the goals of the institution. In return, it is the aim of NMI that the volunteer's experience will be beneficial and rewarding.

5. Supervision and Support

The following provide a support structure to facilitate both effective communication and work between volunteers and NMI staff:

Line Manager is the most senior member of NMI staff in the area where the volunteer is working.

Volunteer Supervisor is a member of NMI staff who will be responsible for administering and supervising work programmes for volunteers.

Volunteer Designated Person is a member of NMI staff who will have day to day contact with volunteers and be available to assist at all times.

HR Volunteer Contact is the member of HR staff who will carry out the HR induction with the volunteer. They will be the initial contact within the HR Unit for assisting a volunteer in dealing with queries that cannot be answered by the Volunteer Designated Person.

Please note that the Line Manager, Volunteer Supervisor and Volunteer Designated Person may be the same person.

6. Role of the Volunteer

The diverse range of departments and areas of work that volunteers can undertake at the NMI may include:

- □ Working with NMI collections and departments such as Marketing, Education and Outreach, Design, Conservation, and Registration
- □ Involvement in behind the scenes work, front line customer services, clerical work or fieldwork.

7. Benefits of Volunteering

NMI recognises that volunteering provides a range of benefits to both the volunteer and NMI. Some of these benefits include:

Benefits to volunteers:

- Increasing access to behind the scenes work at NMI
- Fulfilling a work placement requirement as part of a third level course
- Facilitating the opportunity to carry out meaningful work of value to NMI
- Learning new skills
- Having privileged access to NMI collections not on display
- Obtaining personal fulfillment
- Working closely with a collection of interest
- Improving their employment opportunities.

Benefits to NMI:

- Brings a range of backgrounds, skills, experience and perspectives to the life and function of NMI
- Facilitates greater public participation in the life and function of the NMI and encourages greater ownership of the NMI by the public
- Contributes to NMI research projects
- Avails of the skills and knowledge of volunteers from the local community (for example volunteers giving talks/tours to the public on specific exhibitions).

8. Guidelines for involving Volunteers

(a) Engaging Volunteers

Volunteers may contact the NMI in a number of ways in order to offer their services. Interested individuals should use the *Application Form* on the NMI website:

http://www.museum.ie/en/list/contact-us-form.aspx, or phone the HR Unit at 01 6486443 or 01 6486522.

NMI works with a number of placement agencies and colleges in placing volunteers in appropriate NMI departments. Agencies who wish to highlight the NMI volunteer programme may advertise the NMI website link to interested applicants.

All perspective volunteers who approach NMI or individual departments will be asked /directed to fill out the application form on NMI's website. The HR Unit will in turn pass the form onto the relevant NMI department.

(b) Interview and Start up

The interview can be either face to face or by telephone with the Line Manager. Every effort will be made to match the skills, experience and interest of the volunteer to requirements of the tasks set by NMI.

Subject to the volunteers and NMI agreeing to a placement, volunteers are asked to:

- Agree to undergo a security clearance check
- Provide contact details of next of kin in case of an emergency
- Supply details of any special workplace requirements (if needed)
- Complete a volunteer agreement
- Accept NMI policies as appropriate (e.g. ICT usage policy)
- Complete a declaration form within one week of induction indicating that they have read, understand and accept the contents of the Child Protection Policy.

(c) *Induction and training*

On the first day volunteers receive an induction organised by the HR Volunteer Contact that includes general health and safety training. Volunteers will also meet the Volunteer Designated Person and Volunteer Supervisor, who are members of NMI staff. All volunteers then receive specific on-the-job training from the Volunteer Designated Person before beginning volunteer work. Volunteers may be included in all training deemed appropriate.

(d)Appraisal

Appraisal is a process designed to be helpful and informative to both NMI and the volunteer. After one month of volunteering, the Volunteer Supervisor will discuss the volunteer's work to date. Subsequently, volunteers will be invited to an informal meeting with the Volunteer Supervisor to discuss work, to receive an appraisal, and to provide upward feedback on a minimum of a biannual *basis*. The volunteer may approach the Volunteer Supervisor at any time with any suggestions or issues they might have with their work.

(e) Complaints procedure

If a volunteer has any concerns or complaints that are not resolved directly with the Volunteer Designated Person they should raise these with the Volunteer Supervisor. If these remain unresolved the volunteer should contact the relevant Line Manager and the HR Department if still unresolved.

(f) Insurance

Volunteers are covered under NMI's insurance while working for NMI under the supervision of NMI staff. Line Managers must ensure that volunteers have the necessary training and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to carry out work at NMI to ensure they are covered by State Indemnity.

(g)Expenses

Any proposed travel for volunteers must first be agreed in advance between the volunteer's Line Manager and NMI's HR Manager. If approved, volunteers will receive travel and subsistence rates in accordance with Department of Finance Guidelines. When travel has been undertaken, the volunteer should submit an invoice in respect of travel and subsistence to the Line Manager to be processed by the Finance Unit.

(h) Completion or termination of volunteer work

The volunteer or NMI may discontinue the volunteering placement at any time. It may be necessary to cancel the volunteer placement due to unforeseen circumstances in NMI. Should a volunteer not adhere to NMI relevant policies and procedures or not carry out work satisfactorily, the volunteer will be called to a meeting with the relevant Line Manager to discuss the matter. Following the meeting with the Line Manager, the volunteer may be asked to cease volunteering at NMI. The HR Manager will be informed of such occurrences.

Upon finishing the voluntary work, an exit interview will take place to allow the volunteer to provide feedback to NMI on the experience. The exit interview will be carried out by the Volunteer Supervisor.

9. Volunteer requirements

(a) Agree working hours

Before beginning voluntary work, volunteers will agree a work pattern with the Volunteer Supervisor that fits in with the pre-existing commitments of both the Volunteer Designated Person and the volunteer. Volunteers are expected to attend NMI reliably at the times that they have agreed with the Volunteer Supervisor. If a volunteer cannot attend at the agreed time for any reason, the Volunteer Designated Person should be notified as far in advance as possible. The working pattern may be altered to accommodate changed circumstances of either the Volunteer Designated Person or volunteer.

(b) Volunteer agreement

Upon starting voluntary work, volunteers must sign a volunteer agreement. This agreement reflects the volunteer policy, sets the volunteers working pattern, and also confirms that the volunteer has read information on health and safety, confidentiality and all relevant NMI policies and procedures.

Volunteers should be courteous and respectful towards staff and visitors at all times. Volunteers should not represent themselves to the public as being NMI staff, make public statements about NMI and will abide by the confidentiality clauses in the volunteer agreement.

(c) Confidentiality

Volunteers are expected to respect the confidentiality of any privileged information encountered while volunteering for NMI. Volunteers will not distribute any intellectual property of NMI

without the consent of the Director. All copyright goes to NMI for all original work that the volunteer creates as part of his/her role. Due acknowledgement will be given for the work.

The HR Unit will store all records of personal information relating to volunteers who work/have worked with NMI. These records will be managed under the terms of the Data Protection Acts and remain restricted for use by relevant staff and be used only for appropriate purposes (e.g. providing a reference at the request of the volunteer to prospective employers). Host departments within NMI may retain reports relating to the work of volunteers.

(d) Dress code

A volunteer should dress appropriately according to the task been undertaken and should present a good image to NMI visitors and the public. A volunteer must wear an identification badge when working on NMI property.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by HR on a biannual basis to ensure it serves the needs of volunteers and NMI. The views and opinions of volunteers collated from exit interviews will form an integral part of this review process.

Appendix 1- Volunteers in receipt of Social Welfare Payment

- Volunteers who are in receipt of Social Welfare Payments may only work at NMI when they have received permission from the Department of Social Protection
- On receipt of application from a Volunteer to work at NMI the Line Manager/HR
 Volunteer Contact must first enquire as to whether the Volunteer is in receipt of any type
 of Social Welfare Payment
- If the Volunteer is in receipt of any form of Social Welfare Payment they should seek approval from their local employment exchange/social welfare office
- Approval letter should be forwarded to the HR Volunteer Contact for recording
- The normal recruitment process for Volunteers will continue from here

Appendix 2- Procedure for advertisement and recruitment of FÁS WPP/JobBridge and Volunteers/Interns

- Line Manager decides if the section are going to advertise and recruit a volunteer/intern under the FÁS WPP/Job bridge scheme or by any other means i.e. use of external websites
- 2. Line Manager informs HR Unit of the sections intention to recruit a volunteer/intern and forwards the Job specification to the HR Unit. (Line managers should consult with HR regarding the format of the job specification which must comply with the FÁS/JobBridge online application facility
- 3. HR Unit approves Job specification, and informs Line Manager.
- 4. HR Unit completes the FÁS WPP/JobBridge online application form from the approved Job specification
- 5. All applications submitted to FÁS/Job Bridge go through an assessment process which may take up to three weeks. HR will be informed if the placement is suitable and the date it will be posted to the websites. HR Unit will in turn notify the Line Manager
- 6. HR Unit will post the position on the NMI website including a link to the FÁS /JobBridge website. The Line Manager will forward the information to external websites (ensuring that there is a link to FAS WPP/JobBridge.
- 7. All applications are returned to the HR Unit (recruitment@museum.ie)
- 8. HR Unit will facilitate organisation of the interview process in consultation with the Line Manager and in accordance with best practice
- 9. Following the interview process FÁS WPP/Job bridge candidates successful at interview will be informed. HR will then complete the relevant paperwork and forward to either FÁS/JobBridge. The candidate cannot commence work until approval is received. This process may take up to two weeks. The line manager will be informed as soon as approval is received.

APPENDIX 3 - VOLUNTEERS UNDER 18

- 1. Working and Supervision arrangements for Volunteers under 18 will be as according to the NMI Volunteer Policy
- 2. The welfare of Volunteers under 18 while working at NMI will be governed by the NMI Child Protection Policy that can be accessed at http://www.museum.ie/en/list/policies.aspx