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National Museum of Ireland

Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Collections Research Policy

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National Museum of Ireland – Collections Research Policy

NMI is committed to facilitating research on its collections and values this process as a means to develop our understanding of the collections in our care. NMI recognises the role of its staff in carrying out research and the value of facilitating research by others as individuals or in collaboration with NMI. Research loans of museum heritage objects from NMI collections are covered by the NMI **Loans Policy**. Research on human corporeal remains is covered by the NMI **Human Remains Policy**.

Legislative Basis

The National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 obliges the Board of NMI to carry out research under Section 11 (1) of the legislation. This states:

11— (1) The principal functions of the Board of the Museum shall be to maintain, manage, control, protect, preserve, record, research and enlarge the collection of museum heritage objects for the benefit of the public and to increase and diffuse in and outside the State knowledge of human life in Ireland, of the natural history of Ireland and of the relations of Ireland in these respects with other countries.

Section 11 (2) (e) of the legislation states:

11 – (2) The Board shall have all such powers as it considers necessary or expedient for the performance of its functions under this Act including, but without prejudice to the foregoing, the following powers:

(e) to promote research and scholarship

Principles

Intellectual rigour, honesty and scholarship should underpin research on the holdings of the NMI. Through such activity by our staff or by external researchers we endeavour to:

1. Increase knowledge about the NMI's collections;
2. Enhance the NMI's reputation as a source of excellence;
3. Support the museum's public services
4. Encourage research across multiple collections;
5. Provide a research base for external experts;
6. Attract academic expertise;

Policy

1. The NMI will support and promote research using its collections for a variety of stakeholders, including staff, trustees, academics, students, commercial researchers, learned societies, other cultural and scientific bodies and members of the public with a *bone fide* interest, within the practical limitations imposed by available staffing, resources and the availability of material with regard to its physical condition for handling.

2. Resources that the NMI may offer to support research may include staff time and expertise, library access, archive access, database access, collections access, study space, and relevant equipment where available (on appointment using the duty officer system) and appropriate. Priority will be given to research that increases the breadth and depth of knowledge about our collections and promotes our mission.
3. Research loans may be made available under certain circumstances. In such instances the loans are assessed on a case-by-case basis, but within certain criteria (see NMI Collections **Loans Policy** for details).
4. Destructive sampling may be authorised where a strong case outlining the value of such analyses can be put forward. All destructive sampling requests by staff or external researchers will be based on written applications, and assessed by the Keeper of the relevant collection. These will be judged according to the merits of the proposal in terms of value of the information extracted in balance with damage to the object concerned. Any refusals may be appealed to the Head of Collections & Learning. Any samples not destroyed during analysis remain the property of the NMI and must be returned. In the case of Archaeological Objects, the relevant licences will also apply. Unpublished results of analyses must be lodged on open file in NMI.
5. Research undertaken by museum staff in the course of their employment remains the intellectual property of the State but staff will retain the moral rights, including the right to be recognised as the author of their works. Any collections, records, or acquisitions made during such research are the property of NMI and should follow the NMI Collections **Acquisitions Policy**, and NMI **Archives Policy**.
6. The results of research (including unpublished theses) undertaken at the NMI or using the collections in our care should be reported and made available to the NMI. All published outcomes of such research should be in line with the terms of the NMI **Publications Policy** and copies should be deposited with the NMI Library
7. All researchers, both internal and external should acknowledge appropriately the contribution of the individuals, organisations (including any associated third level institutions, or political entities, e.g. the EU Commission) and funders involved in supporting their research and cite the work of other authors fully and accurately. All published reference to museum objects used in research must detail their registration numbers.
8. The NMI will establish good governance and management practices, protecting confidentiality and managing intellectual property whilst ensuring a safe research environment by setting standards for supervision of researchers and providing any necessary staff training.
9. In order to ensure the ongoing care and security of our collections, staff and visitors, the NMI, at the discretion of the Director, reserves the right to refuse research access to individuals and organisations with a known association with illegal, unethical, abusive or destructive activity