



University of
St Andrews

Exhibitions policy

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1.1	Updated review date	Draft	Claire Robinson, Collections & Exhibitions Curator, University Museums	07/10/2020

St Andrews University Museums Exhibitions and Displays Policy 2019

1. Policy Overview

The purpose of this policy is to provide high-level information focused on St Andrews University Museums exhibitions and displays. It provides information about our exhibition and display venues, our exhibitions programme and the aims that guide this programme. It also outlines the process by which individual exhibitions and displays are selected, including selection criteria.

St Andrews University Museums are a key component of the University's cultural heritage provision. We are currently in an exciting period of redevelopment that involves the expansion of the University Museum to accommodate significant new temporary exhibition space. This enables us to grow our exhibitions programme to include touring exhibitions and high-profile loan and partnership opportunities. Our expanded exhibitions programme supports and promotes our mission and vision, as outlined below.

2. Our Mission

The mission of St Andrews University Museums is to develop and care for its collections and to make these accessible to all – to be a museum that has a central role within a world class University – maximising this position and its collections to enrich the experiences of its audiences – academics, students and the wider community.

It supports the University strategy and ambition – aligned to the five core ideas of social responsibility, world-leading, diverse, global and entrepreneurial St Andrews. Demonstrating a determination to move forward with purpose, integrity, and success: *Ever to Excel*.

3. Our Vision

The University Museum will be a world leader in the use of museum collections and culture to create opportunities for engagement for wider public benefit.

The University Museum will be a cultural hub at the centre of St Andrews. It will provide an open door for conversation with our communities, a place of encounter with collections, people and ideas. The University Museum will be recognised as a place of innovation and experimentation that embodies the spirit of research, a forum for meetings of minds and a space for learning, conversation, provocation and action. This is embodied in its approach to research, teaching, programming and engagement. The University Museum will set an exemplary standard in collections care and understanding, leading the way in building the relationship between University research and the use and development of the collections.

4. Our Exhibitions

This policy covers all St Andrews University Museums exhibition and display activities, including exhibitions in our two accredited museum venues, the University Museum and the Bell Pettigrew Museum.

We also manage displays across the University campus in academic departments, library spaces, halls of residence and state rooms. Any displays that contain University museum collections must be managed by St Andrews University Museums and are subject to individual discussion and agreement.

The redevelopment of the University Museum has created a new temporary exhibition gallery that has resulted in a significant increase in the amount of available display space. This facilitates an expanded exhibitions programme to include touring exhibitions and high-profile loan and partnership

opportunities. The new exhibition gallery is a flexible space that can be configured to accommodate large and small exhibitions. It has been designed to meet Government Indemnity Standards for environmental control and security.

Our exhibitions programme at the University Museum consists of two to three core exhibitions in the large gallery space and four to six smaller exhibitions each year in the smaller gallery. Exhibitions are accompanied by education and outreach programmes, publications and retail merchandise. Our exhibitions programme is agreed 1-3 years in advance, depending on the scale of exhibitions.

In developing our exhibitions programme, we are guided by the following aims:

1. To increase understanding and engagement with the University's collections through the development of exhibitions that are accessible to all of our audiences and seek to meet their needs
2. To act as a conduit between the University's collections and our audiences, providing accessible exhibitions that encourage understanding, engagement, discussion and debate
3. To develop exhibitions that represent the highest standard in the care and display of exhibits, exhibition design, interpretation and audience engagement
4. To develop exhibitions as part of a varied, balanced programme that provides a multidisciplinary and multi perspective approach to subjects, ideas and themes
5. To support and promote academic teaching and research within the University through the development of exhibitions that encourage the sharing, discussion, debate and challenging of ideas for the wider public benefit
6. To engage with contemporary issues that affect society and encourage learning, conversation, provocation and action
7. To produce exhibitions that are innovative, creative and experimental in their approach
8. To actively engage and partner with existing audiences and low-user groups, increasing our understanding of those audiences through collaboration, audience research and evaluation
9. To stage exhibitions that provide a distinctive contribution to the other cultural heritage provisions within the University – especially at the University Library, Byre Theatre and the Music Centre – and also wider St Andrews – the British Golf Museum, St Andrews Museum (Fife Cultural Trust), St Andrews Preservation Trust and St Andrews Cathedral and Castle (Historic Environment Scotland) and the St Andrews Botanic Gardens
10. To collaborate with diverse partners, including academics and community groups, to develop engaging exhibitions
11. To work with our cultural partners within the University to develop exhibition themes and ideas that promote cross-working and programming opportunities to maximise impact
12. To develop exhibitions in partnership with museums across the UK and further afield to share expertise, reach new audiences and promote further knowledge of St Andrews University Museums within the national and international museum community

5. Our Audiences

The University Museum will expand its visitor figures from c. 33,000 in 2017-8 to c. 50,000 in 2020-1 - with an ambition to reach 70,000 within three years. To achieve this, we will attract a wide range of audiences to the University Museum, including repeat visitors, through the delivery of innovative and accessible exhibitions. Our key audiences are:

- University community, including staff and students
- Independent adults, including local interested adults, weekenders and 'culture vultures'
- Future learners and kids on holiday
- Tourism Scotland market
- Our community base through collaborative and tailored approaches
- School audiences through exhibition-based programming

We expand our knowledge about our visitors through audience research carried out regularly during the year. The evaluation of exhibitions and permanent displays, as well as some key displays, informs future programming.

6. Selection of Exhibitions

St Andrews University Museums welcomes exhibition proposals from across and outside of the University. The first stage in the process will be the completion of a Note of Interest Form, which can be accessed via the St Andrews University Museums website. Curatorial staff will talk to the principal contact to provide guidance on the best method of delivery for their proposal. If it is felt that the proposal is most suited to an exhibition, the principal contact will then be requested to complete an Exhibition Proposal Form.

All exhibition proposals will be considered for their suitability as an exhibition by St Andrews University Museums on a quarterly basis. Shortlisted exhibitions will be considered by the Museum's Academic Advisory Committee, which meets three times a year. The Committee will consider proposals in accordance with the following criteria:

1. The relevance of the exhibition to our exhibition aims, as outlined in section 4
2. The relevance of the exhibition to our target audiences throughout the annual programme
3. Impact of the proposed exhibition in the promotion and support of engagement opportunities with our diverse user groups
4. Display of a range of different media e.g. objects, costume, paintings, sculpture, specimens, new media
5. Availability and suitability, including legal title/ownership, of the items intended for display in the proposed exhibition
6. Capacity to facilitate the proposed exhibition, which is subject to available resources, organisational priorities and staff time
7. Scope for income-generation through sponsorship and retail opportunities

The final decision will be made by the Director of Museums and approved by the Assistant Vice Principal, Collections and Digital Content on behalf of the University. St Andrews University Museums will inform applicants when a decision has been reached.

7. Exhibition Process

Following the approval of an exhibition proposal, St Andrews University Museums will prepare an exhibition agreement in consultation with the exhibition partner(s). This will set out the terms and conditions for the development and delivery of the project. Exhibition timescales, budgets and the commitments of each partner is determined at the early planning stages.

University curatorial staff will lead on all aspects of the management of the exhibition including project planning, exhibition design, conservation, interpretation, installation, marketing and evaluation.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Final	Approved	Claire Robinson, Collections & Exhibitions Curator,	June 2019

			University Museums	
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