



LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The collections of Durham University Library constitute a unique learning resource that can be a source of inspiration and enjoyment for all. Learning and engagement is central to all of our work. As such, this policy informs all activities across the organisation and is not restricted to the work of the Learning Team.

We use the term 'learning' in its broadest sense and value all kinds of learning activities, both formal and informal. We base our definition of learning on that provided by the Campaign for Learning and the (now defunct) Museums, Libraries and Archives Council as we believe it encompasses our core belief.

Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings, or an increase in the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more.

2.0 MISSION STATEMENT

We aim to provide access to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities and to encourage participation, enjoyment and understanding of the collections, exhibitions and associated activities. We aim to motivate and inspire our visitors to learn more

about their history, the heritage and history of Durham and the North East, the wider world, its peoples, histories and cultures.

Aims

- To promote and increase access to the collections of Durham University that are found in the University museums and Palace Green Library
- To raise awareness within the local, regional and national communities of Library and Heritage Collections and the services we offer
- To promote our collections as a resource for lifelong learning
- To improve the quality and experience of learning of pupils and students of all ages through the appropriate use of our resources
- To support the University's teaching and learning programmes wherever possible
- To support access to and engagement with research emanating from the University's diverse academic community
- To support the University's widening participation agenda by providing a welcoming first contact with the University for learners of all ages but particularly for school age students
- To promote social inclusion and develop new audiences

Objectives

- To increase access to the collections and extend the community of users of our collections both locally and at a distance
- To offer onsite and outreach education sessions for schools and other groups of learners.
- To provide suitable online resources for schools and other groups of learners.
- To provide events and activities for learners of all ages on an informal basis
- To provide training and advice on the educational use of material in the collections
- To support teachers using material from our collections in their teaching.
- To offer guidance to all users of our collections in using material for research
- To encourage links between us and external organisations and to collaborate with them on joint projects
- To promote our collections and services using all appropriate forms of media
- To promote our collections and venues as centres for research

- To increase the accessibility of the collections and educational services
- To integrate access and learning into all the interpretative activities of Library and Heritage Collections.

How we will meet our aims and objectives

- We will offer a programme of visits to schools and other groups of learners using an appropriate range of materials and activities. These will be offered as both onsite visits and as outreach activities.
- We will provide a programme of exhibitions and events both onsite and offsite. This may include: exhibitions, talks, lectures, attendance at fairs and organising open days/evenings.
- We will offer sessions to University students and staff to meet their specific demands.
- We will offer ITT and INSET training in collaboration with the University, the LEA and the local Education and Business Partnerships.
- We will advise teachers of all learning groups on the availability and use of material found in our collections
- We will offer guidance and advice to students of all ages on the finding and use of material in our collections
- We will create online educational resources using the material found in our collections that can be used by learners of all levels.
- We will promote the extent and scope of material found in our collections through the development of publications and resource packs.
- We will develop our online presence to meet the demands of learners unable to make an onsite visit.
- We will promote our work through various outlets including the local, regional and national press, social media, radio and television and via attendance at conferences and other events.
- We will collaborate with other local organisations including other sections of the University and community groups on projects of mutual interest.
- We will work with regional groups such as Arts Council England, regional museum, archive and library network to promote the use of our collections.

3.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring is undertaken by:

- Recording the provision of and attendance at talks and visits
- Recording the provision of exhibitions
- Recording the nature and extent of each school and other learning group contact

Evaluation is obtained via:

- The collection and review of questionnaires and comment forms
- Informal feedback
- The use of focus groups as appropriate

4.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the Learning & Engagement Policy.

VERSION CONTROL

Approval date: February 2023

Approved by: University Library & Collections SMT

Contact for further information: University Library & Collections