



Learning Policy

1 Introduction

The Chester Beatty has an indispensable role to play in developing mutual understanding and respect among all people on our island, as explicitly stated in our Mission. To this end, the Chester Beatty has carved a unique role among Irish National Cultural Institutions by reaching out to the existing and emerging communities in Ireland. By drawing upon and interpreting our extraordinary Collections to engage and forge relationships with the newest members of our society, a diverse intercultural programme has emerged and continues to develop. It is a timely programme that acknowledges the changing profile of the Irish population and the need to address issues such as diversity and intercultural dialogue.

The Chester Beatty encourages creative collaborations with local partners to co-develop programmes and new learning interpretations of its Collections for audiences. The Learning and Education Department will offer early childhood, primary and post-primary schools and teachers guided tours, hands-on activities (workshops), handling kits, online learning activities and continuous professional development (CPD) through its intercultural schools programme.

Through its learning activities, the Chester Beatty seeks to embed core values of learning, inspire intercultural dialogue, creativity and well-being, both onsite and off-site, by addressing the needs of the Chester Beatty's culturally diverse audiences of all ages through the cultural, religious, geographic, historic, scientific and artistic aspects of the Collection.

2 Purpose

In writing this policy the museum aims to:

1. State the Chester Beatty's commitment to supporting formal and informal learning in Ireland, by inspiring intercultural dialogue, creativity and well-being
2. Emphasise the important role the learning programme can play in supporting skills-development in Ireland and engage new audiences with the Collections of the Chester Beatty.
3. Articulate the commitment of the Chester Beatty to access and inclusion, audience development and visitor engagement, both onsite and online.

3 The aims of the learning programme are to:

1. Support formal and informal learning in Ireland, with a focus on developing skills for learning.
2. Support key subjects in the Irish curricula including languages, science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM), craft and design, art history, history, geography, religious education, creative and critical thinking and classics.
3. Introduce children, families, young people and culturally diverse learners to the Chester Beatty.
4. Promote lifelong learning through an inclusive programme aimed at learners of all ages and abilities.

4 Our approach to learning

The Chester Beatty Collection inspires learning for all. This is reflected in our approach to learning and acknowledges core key competences and best practice. To this end, the Chester Beatty will:

- Enable programme participants and visitors to develop key skills, with particular focus on creativity and critical thinking skills;
- Recognise and respect the cultural diversity of our audiences as reflected in the Collections;
- Promote and encourage audience engagement with the Collections primarily through the exhibitions and online;
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of a selection of learning projects to develop our practice and broaden our reach;
- Design our programmes to meet all levels of learning competences and support a wide range of learning outcomes including knowledge and understanding; attitudes and values; skills; behaviour and progression; enjoyment, inspiration and creativity;
- Encourage audiences to discover the variety of cultures the Collection represents and inspire wonder and enjoyment.

5 Support for primary, post-primary and continuous education

A key function of the Learning and Education Department is to support formal education in Ireland. It recognises the changing curricula in Irish primary and post-primary schools and the presence of cultural diversity in the classroom. Its intercultural schools programme includes:

- Online Collection-based learning resources with special focus on art and design for the Junior and Leaving Certificate;
- Onsite educational visits facilitated by volunteer guides utilising creative and critical thinking skills;
- Continuous professional development for primary and post-primary teachers and educators;
- Online Collection-based learning resources for language support, science, technology, engineering, art and maths (STEAM) and world faiths.

6 Supporting teachers, educators and developing the curriculum through continuous professional development

A key component of the museum's work is to provide continuous professional development for teachers, trainee teachers, educators and creative innovators. This work aims to raise awareness of the Chester Beatty's programmes, learning resources and projects that help to develop new ways of teaching and using the Collections. The Learning and Education Department will:

- Offer continuous professional development in-house, off-site and online;
- Partner with formal and informal education partners to design and deliver training with focus on cultural diversity, creativity, innovation and critical thinking skills;
- Utilise online collection resources and existing learning materials as part of continuous professional development.

7 Online and digital engagement

The Chester Beatty will maintain and advance the programmes and technical resources necessary to connect the museum's growing collection of digital resources with schools, learners and the general public, both physically and virtually, and for local and global audiences. The museum will:

- Continue to provide access to existing online materials;
- Strive to develop online learning resources to support a virtual audience that may not have a physical presence in the museum;
- Utilise the new online collection resources within the learning programme.

8 Access, inclusion and cultural diversity

The Chester Beatty actively encourages engagement with communities whose cultures are represented in the Collections. It engages on all levels of learning, from the design and delivery of art workshops to learning resources for children, teachers and educators as well as native speakers of languages reflected in our Collections. The museum will:

- Promote physical, virtual, intellectual and social access to the Collections including access to existing online materials;
- Design special programmes that reflect the positive impact museums can have on our health and well-being;
- Actively encourage engagement with groups with special learning needs or physical impairments;
- Foster partnerships with local community groups that may not have opportunities to visit museums;
- Commit to providing our visitors with a lasting and memorable experience. The museum's Customer Charter sets out the standards of service visitors are entitled to expect from us and the Action Plan details how we plan to provide and maintain this level of service.

9 Approval/Revision History

This Learning Policy is version 2.0, formally approved by the Trustees on 13 December 2019. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head of Education and a full revision will take place every 5 years.