

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

Research Code of Practice

This Code of Practice sets out standards of conduct expected of all researchers engaged in research at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM). It is designed to ensure that all research carried out in TWAM venues is conducted in accordance with the highest standards.

Definition

Research is understood to involve original investigation undertaken in order to gain and develop knowledge and understanding. This definition includes the following:

- Scholarship: the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information.
- Pure Research: work undertaken to acquire new knowledge without a particular application in view.
- Strategic Research: work which is carried out to discover new knowledge which might provide for an envisioned future application.
- Applied Research: work which is undertaken to discover new applications of existing or new knowledge.
- Action Research: the development of new knowledge through engagement in practice.

Within the museum and archive setting some of the above work takes place within the context of research informing the identification, selection and acquisition of objects into collections and exhibitions. Research may also focus on collections, or audiences, or both. Research also plays an active part in the conservation, presentation and interpretation of objects and documents and is essential in providing appropriate levels of documentation and cataloguing.

All research supports the creation of knowledge whereby information about material in TWAM's collections is enriched by a broader comprehension of their wider historical context and their social, intellectual, technological and aesthetic significance.

Principles of the Code

Professional Standards

Researchers should observe the standards of practice set out in this code and take all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with funder, institutional, legal, ethical and moral obligations in managing research projects.

Visiting researchers are expected to demonstrate integrity and professionalism;

- observe fairness and equity;
- avoid, and/or declare, conflicts of interest;
- ensure the safety and well-being of those associated with the research;
- observe all relevant legal and ethical requirements;

- be open to scrutiny and debate.

Researchers are required to comply with all instructions and guidance from TWAM staff.

Good research practice should also include:

- securing and storing primary data appropriately;
- documenting results clearly and accurately;
- attributing and acknowledging the contributions of others;
- co-operating with other researchers;
- taking special account of the needs of young or inexperienced researchers.

Collections Access

In principle, all museum objects and archive materials are available for public viewing and study.

There are some objects which require more stringent access conditions due to their condition, cultural sensitivity, legal conditions or health and safety requirements. Users will be advised of these conditions when making an appointment and it may take longer to arrange access. In some cases access will not be possible.

Using the Research Rooms, Stores and Great North Museum Library

- Most of the collection consists of items which are rare, unique or fragile and users are asked to treat the materials with care and respect.
- You may only use pencils or a laptop/tablet to take notes or make drawings in the research rooms, search room, stores or library as ink can permanently damage objects.
- Researchers are asked to follow the instructions given by TWAM staff for the safety and security of the collection. You should wash your hands before and after handling any collection items. Where protective equipment is required (e.g. gloves) this will be provided for the user.
- Researchers are responsible for all items issued to them until returned to TWAM staff.
- Visitors are asked to respect other users and conduct any necessary discussions quietly.
- The use of mobile phones or devices which interrupt other researchers is not allowed in the research rooms, stores or library. Users should ensure that photography does not disturb other researchers.
- Food and drink are not permitted in the research rooms, stores or library as this could result in damage to the collections.
- Bags and coats are not permitted in the research areas and must be deposited in lockers or left with museum/archive staff.

Copyright

Researchers may make drawings or take digital images for personal research purposes only. There is a separate permission form. Images can only be published or disseminated in any form with the express permission of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

Where TWAM objects are referred to in theses and publications, in many cases, their first citation should follow the style: <*object title*>, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, <*accession number (or reference)*>. However, researchers should consult the relevant museum/archive manager to ensure that associated learned societies/depositors should not also be cited.

Where TWAM's collections or other research assets form a significant part of a research project we require that a copy of the completed study, whether published or not, be deposited with us for future reference. This must be in digital form. A hard copy may also be provided.

Research involving human participants

Researchers should ensure that any information obtained from Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums relating to living individuals is used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Any photography of museum/archive visitors will require their consent (or that of their parents). Researchers should complete TWAM's photographic/video consent form with each participant.

Researchers should ensure confidentiality of personal information relating to participants in research and that the research fulfils appropriate legal requirements e.g. Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Tissue Act 2004.

Research involving live animals

Researchers should obtain approval through appropriate ethical review processes (applying to relevant venue managers) and be aware that they may require Home Office licences for the institution, the investigator and the project.

Research involving Human Remains and objects containing Human Remains

Researchers should be aware of, and work within TWAM's policy and guidance on the research and display of Human Remains, and The Human Tissue Act 2004.

Consumer/Visitor Involvement

Researchers should communicate with TWAM Learning and Communications staff about intended visitor research, to follow informed consent guidelines and ethical procedures for recording public participation. Researchers should consider and be aware of the active involvement of consumer/visitor groups in research and the dissemination of research findings. It is important for researchers to consider the impact any publication of research findings may have on those involved in the research and consumer groups.

Supervision of Students

Museum staff acting as sole or joint supervisors of students undertaking research shall provide information, advice and training on the code of practice, expectations, managing and monitoring of student performance. All Museum and Archives staff involved with the supervision of students should consult the relevant University's codes of practice on student supervision.

TWAM recommends that where Museum and Archives staff are involved in the supervision of students it is conducted in close partnership with staff from the appropriate HEI. The appropriate member of staff of the HEI must be responsible for ensuring the student fulfils the requirements under the University's regulations for the degree the student is registered for.

Misconduct

Misconduct in research is defined as non-compliance with TWAM's Research Code of Practice and includes, but is not restricted to:

- Plagiarism - the copying or use of ideas, data or text without permission or acknowledgement.
- Fraud - deliberate deception, involving the invention of data or the fabrication of results.
- Collusion - aiding or attempting to aid, or obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from another person to conceal research misconduct.
- Interference - intentional damage to, or removal of, the research-related property of another.
- Non-compliance - the deliberate failure to comply with obligations to TWAM, sponsor, funding body, professional body or partner, including accounting requirements, ethics, and health and safety regulations.

Staff, students and those contracted to undertake research for TWAM are required to report research misconduct, where they have good cause to believe it is occurring, to their line manager, with reference to the Research Manager. Allegations or complaints about misconduct in research will be referred to the director of TWAM.

TWAM's Research Code of Practice guidance follows national standards in good practice. Similar documents have been produced by other museums. This Code is based on those produced by the British Museum and Glasgow Museums.

The Code will be made publicly available through the TWAM website.

Agreement

All researchers must sign and observe TWAM's Research Code of Practice. It is designed to protect the collections and other TWAM research assets and ensure positive working relationships for all our users.

Researcher

I agree to adhere to this Code of Practice.

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

Address:

Email:
Phone

Supervising member of TWAM staff

Signed:

Date:

For university research student supervisors

Name of supervising institution:

Staff supervisor name:

Staff supervisor email:
Phone:

Date: