

AMGUEDDFA CYMRU

**Research Strategy
2022 - 2027**

1. Introduction

The Research Strategy has been developed to support the delivery of our corporate strategy, Amgueddfa Cymru 2030. Research at Amgueddfa Cymru touches on all aspects of Welsh life. During the pandemic, the ways in which we engaged with and supported our visitors changed dramatically and opened up new questions about our role in the cultural landscape of Wales. Our researchers are working on topics ranging from the biodiversity crisis to food networks in early medieval societies and the history of LGBTQ+ communities in Wales.

We are committed to undertaking high-quality research across the natural sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities that benefits communities in Wales. Research has been identified as a key enabler for the delivery of Amgueddfa Cymru 2030. It will allow us to better understand our services, improve visitor experience and support our move towards net zero carbon operation. As the only Independent Research Organisation in the cultural sector in Wales we will use the unique elements of our museums and collections to deliver research that others cannot.

Amgueddfa Cymru 2030 sets out our commitment to ensuring that everyone in Wales has the opportunity to shape and participate in the cultural life of our nation. We recognise our responsibility to reflect the experiences of all communities, and are committed to listening to and learning from those who do not yet see themselves adequately represented in our work. Research can play an important role in bringing untold histories into the light. It can also help us understand the ways in which museums may perpetuate inequality and how we can do better.

Through research we will support the achievement of our strategy's six commitments to Wales. We will work with communities to make sure that **everyone is represented**. Participatory research that makes use of our diverse collections will **inspire creativity and learning for life**. Our researchers in the natural sciences will contribute to internationally important work to **help safeguard and restore nature and our natural environment**. We will also use our sites as test beds for sustainability research in the built and natural environment. New research with communities across Wales will give greater insight into how we **can support well-being through inspirational spaces and experiences**, with accessibility at their core. We will continue to undertake research to develop new and exciting ways for visitors to **discover and explore the museum digitally**. Finally, we will **build global connections** to ensure that communities both within Wales and internationally benefit from the work we do.

2. Research priorities

Through our research we seek to engage diverse communities and help to shape a future for Wales where everyone feels a sense of connection and belonging. As champions of cultural democracy and cultural rights, we will use research to explore Welsh identities and strengthen our relationships with other nations. We will research the gaps in our collections and explore the best ways to fill them. Through this process we will challenge traditional models of museums, making Wales a leader in socially committed museum practice.

Over the next five years our research will focus on the following areas:

Decolonisation – implementing our charter for decolonisation, and ensuring that everyone in Wales is represented, will be one of the key drivers of our work in the coming years. Decolonisation research will not just uncover new interpretations of our objects, it will explore the gaps in our collections where communities are under-represented both in the stories we tell about Welsh identity and the objects that we display. It will go further to uncover and help dismantle the barriers within our organisation and the heritage sector more widely that continue to disadvantage certain groups and communities.

Inclusion – improving the inclusivity and accessibility of our services means many different things to different people. We do not want access to be restricted to those who can travel to our locations. Through our research we will seek to improve access to our collections with new ways of interacting digitally and new ways of sharing objects with local museums and community organisations. We will also conduct research to improve the accessibility of our locations as well as the services they provide and the objects within them. With BSL as our official third language, and work ongoing to enhance the museum experience for visually impaired visitors, we will explore new ways to make what we do as inclusive as possible.

Environmental protection and sustainability – we recognise the need for national institutions to lead the way on environmental sustainability. We will use our museums to understand how biodiversity is changing and how to support healthy resilient ecosystems. Our farm at St Fagans will be used for agricultural research on the future of farming and sustainable eating. Our collections contain unique baseline information on biodiversity throughout Wales and worldwide, which supports research monitoring and safeguarding our natural environment. We will undertake taxonomic studies that underpin our understanding of biodiversity, so our research has a global reach. We will also work to make our care and preservation of the museum buildings and estate sustainable, and work with partners to explore innovation in this area.

Cynefin – our collections can give the people and communities of Wales an understanding of the historical, biological and geological heritage of their local area, providing them with a sense of place and ownership. Research will investigate past environments and how the geology of an area is represented in the built heritage, use of mineral resources and links to industry. This will link to and support our interpretation and understanding of our museums and also support the development of content required for public programmes, with Cynefin forming an important focus for History in the new curriculum for Wales.

3. Aims and Impacts

Make sure that everyone is represented		
Aim	Examples of Activity	Impact
To work collaboratively with communities across Wales through all stages of the research process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agenda for our research into decolonising the collections is set by communities of relevance. Participatory research methods are used wherever possible, with lived experience valued as highly as traditional academic expertise. New opportunities for collaboration are prioritised to help us increase the diversity of lived experiences that we are able to serve through our research programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater representation of minoritized communities. Research projects meet the needs of our communities. Skills development for community-based researchers.
To uncover the hidden stories about our organisation and our collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting research into the histories of items in our collections to uncover all the facts about their origins and how we acquired them. Creating space through participatory research practice for new voices to contribute to the retelling of the stories of our collections. Conducting research into Amgueddfa Cymru's institutional history and the legacy of this in its contemporary practice, for example in the context of decolonising the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New interpretations of our collections reflect a broader range of experiences. Minoritised communities can see themselves more accurately reflected in the stories we tell. Our museums are more welcoming and engaging. Amgueddfa Cymru is a more transparent organisation, more open to change.

Inspire creativity and learning for life

Aim	Activity	Impact
To explore potential research areas for both programmes and self-directed learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map existing research on the impacts of accessible self-directed engagement in the areas of lifelong learning and creativity. • Complete a literature review of current best practice in museum-based learning both in terms of programmes and self-directed learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of how we can best support learning. • New approaches to developing content for public programmes based on the latest research. • Improved learning experience for our visitors.
To undertake research projects that actively support public programme content and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively seek out research opportunities based on long-term planning for exhibitions, public events and learning programmes. • Work with the exhibitions team to develop a pipeline of research requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative, engaging content for our visitors. • Richer content in our exhibitions to support visitor engagement in Wales and internationally.
To increase opportunities to participate in research projects for people from non- traditional academic backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, include paid roles for community- based researchers in our funded projects. • Pilot a new scheme including funding and mentoring and full access to our collections, archives and libraries to support research skills development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development opportunities for community-based researchers. • New opportunities for people wanting to move into research within the heritage sector.

<p>To make our research outputs accessible to all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wherever possible, research will be published in open access formats.• Key findings from our projects will be made available via blogs and social media, regardless of publication method.• Our success in reaching wider audiences with our research will be tracked using Altmetrics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The knowledge we produce will be freely available to all.• Research will be presented in engaging, easily digestible formats for different audiences.• We will gain a greater understanding of who is engaging with our research, allowing us to further improve communication in the future.
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Help protect and restore nature and our environment

Aim	Activity	Impact
To use the diverse landscapes of our museums to support innovative environmental research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with university partners to explore how our museum estate (e.g. the farm and woodlands at St Fagans) can be used to develop models for sustainable land use. • Biodiversity surveys across all our sites will provide base line data for future research on environmental change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our visitors can experience first-hand more sustainable approaches to farming. • Improved understanding of how our environment is changing across different areas in Wales.
To collaborate with other national organisations in Wales on research of national importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to environmental monitoring projects, building on our world-leading expertise in taxonomy. • Continue to work internationally on projects relating to biodiversity and non-native invasive species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved information available for environmental policy makers and practitioners.
To collaborate with research organisations around the world on projects of international importance, in particular where this creates opportunities for researchers from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with international research partners through new collaborative projects to achieve this aim. • Identify new collaborators in countries where our natural history collections can contribute to understanding of the historic natural environment. • Continue to conduct research on biodiversity and environmental change that can contribute to international understanding, e.g. through reports from the IUCN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of environmental change and human impacts on an international scale. • Improved environmental monitoring data.

<p>To develop a programme of research to support delivery of net zero carbon targets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop research projects to investigate how green energy projects can be incorporated into our management of our museums and museum estate. • Identify research projects that explore ways to reduce carbon emissions across all areas of our business including e.g. buildings and estates management and green procurement practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our carbon footprint is reduced.
<p>To connect the communities we serve with their local natural environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build public-facing skills development activities into our research projects to equip people with the skills they need to help monitor biodiversity in their local area. • Participatory research projects exploring how the geology of Wales has shaped our built environment and cultural traditions. • Participatory research exploring the natural history collections to uncover new stories that connect people to the natural world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities feel a greater connection to their local area through improved understanding of their natural environment. • Improved skills within communities to support environmental and biodiversity monitoring in their local area.

Support well-being through inspirational spaces and experiences

Aim	Activity	Impact
<p>To identify opportunities for research that can support visitor well-being and social prescribing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map existing research on impacts of museum spaces and programmes on health and well-being. • Identify potential collaborators across Wales with expertise in well-being research, including social prescribing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved well-being for visitors to our museums.
<p>To develop a research programme to improve the inclusivity of our sites, collections and public programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agenda for inclusivity research is set by communities of relevance. • Build on existing strengths in dementia support to develop community-led research that can benefit the heritage sector. • Develop research to evaluate the benefits to patients and staff of museum-based displays and programmes in healthcare settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved visitor experience for all. • New tools and approaches to support well-being for people living with dementia through engagement with us. • Increased well-being for staff and patients in healthcare settings through engagement with our work.
<p>To develop research projects that support the cost-effective maintenance of our historic buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop research projects to investigate the application of traditional methods for managing the internal environmental conditions in our historic buildings. • Develop research projects to investigate how digital technologies can be used to support cost-effective maintenance of historic buildings and machinery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More comfortable indoor environments for our staff and visitors. • More cost-effective maintenance options for our buildings. • Improved lifespan and useability for our historic buildings and machinery.

Discover and explore the museum digitally

Aim	Activity	Impact
<p>To support work to improve digital experiences, services and content, including through participatory research projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop research projects driven by visitors' requirements to ensure that new digital experiences meet their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our work is accessible to a wider audience.
<p>To improve online access to all aspects of our research and research community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver new digital catalogue for our library. • Explore options for accessible online repositories for our research outputs. • Redesign and relaunch our research webpages to make our research work and our research-active staff profiles more accessible to potential collaborators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers and potential collaborators from all backgrounds have access to the resources they need.

Build global connections

Aim	Activity	Impact
Develop global research partnerships that benefit Wales, across a range of disciplines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct natural sciences research with international partners. • Continue to develop research into the works and lives of internationally recognised artists represented in our collections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are contributing to environmental research of international significance. • We are telling new stories that can reach international audiences through digital platforms and touring exhibitions.
Seek new funding opportunities to build international research networks that benefit people and communities in Wales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for funding such as AHRC networking grants which support work with international collaborators. • Apply for funding from sources such as the British Council, designed to support international collaboration. • Wherever feasible and appropriate, include the full costs for international collaborators in our grant applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our research contributes to solving internationally important problems. • Our researchers gain new skills and experience by collaborating with the best internationally. • Our collaborators have access to new resources to support research of mutual benefit.
Support international knowledge exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver an online seminar series with invited international speakers. • Deliver an annual research conference with a blend of face-to-face and digital sessions to support engagement for international speakers and attendees. • Support applications from international researchers to undertake projects with us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our researchers are up to date with relevant international research. • We are learning from research carried out in different cultural contexts that can inform our work on inclusivity and decolonisation. • We share what we learn from our research with the widest possible audience.

Research as a Strategic Enabler

Aim	Activity	Impact
To train the next generation of researchers in the cultural sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead application for CDP4 in collaboration with the National Botanic Garden and the National Library. • Increase engagement with doctoral training partnerships to diversify the funding sources for collaborative PhD awards. • Create an internal structure and guidance for staff to support short-term career development placements for PhD students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for people living and working in Wales to undertake PhD level research. • Improved skills for early career researchers wanting to work in the heritage sector.
To relaunch the Honorary Research Fellow programme for a wider audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a rolling programme of recruitment for Honorary Research Fellows with positions reviewed every two years. • Target advertisement at groups coming from non- traditional as well as traditional research backgrounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater diversity of people participating in our research programme. • Fellows provide a range of complementary skills, knowledge and experience to work alongside curatorial staff.
To undertake research projects that actively support public programme content and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively seek out research opportunities based on long-term planning for exhibitions, public events and learning programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our public programmes provide richer interpretations and new stories for our visitors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the exhibitions team to develop a pipeline of research requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our exhibitions showcase new knowledge and understanding developed by our researchers.
<p>To strengthen our research culture and increase the number of research active staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our existing programme of seminars and research away-days to include more external collaborators. • More staff members applying to sit on review panels for e.g. AHRC and Horizon Europe. • More staff members participating as reviewers and editors for relevant academic and industry publications. • Consistently providing institutional and individual responses to funders about the future of e.g. funding in the heritage sector and postgraduate training. • Provide mentoring for early career researchers or staff wanting to move into research for the first time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing numbers of staff have the confidence to take part in and lead research projects. • Increased number of applications for externally funded research projects.
<p>To maintain our status as an Independent Research Organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policies relating to ethics and good conduct in research and research governance. • Maintain accurate records of all externally funded research across the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued eligibility to apply for funding from UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) and to host externally funded researchers.

<p>To raise the profile of our Library as key component of our research capability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer training and guidance on areas of research dissemination, such as Open Access publishing, managing research data, bibliometrics and Altmetrics. • Support our research community through supervision of PhD students and placements. • Conduct research into the history of our collections with a view to shedding more light on the history of Amgueddfa Cymru and how that can inform current collecting activity. • Develop collections into stronger research resources through the in-depth analysis of contents and identification of gaps, especially from a decolonising perspective of challenging bias and a lack of representation. • Ensure collections are accessible, both digitally and physically, with a specific view to engaging diverse audiences and positioning ourselves globally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of library resources to support internal research projects. • Staff across the organisation have the skills and confidence to publish and promote their research for a variety of audiences. • Work on decolonising in other areas of the collections is enhanced by resources from the library. • Research projects for individuals and organisations locally, nationally and internationally are supported by our collections.
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