

Gailearaí Ealaíne
Crawford
Art Gallery

Job Description



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Contents

Introduction	4
Role Purpose	4
Reporting and Scope of Role	5
Phased Delivery Context (2027–2030)	6
Key Responsibilities in the Role	9
Essential Requirements	12



Courtyard, Crawford Art Gallery, Artistic impression. GA

Introduction

Crawford Art Gallery, a National Cultural Institution, will, post-redevelopment, become a distinctive landmark for Cork City and the wider region, a cultural hub and a visual icon – a place for encounter, a destination, a venue and a base for crafting ambitious artistic programmes and meaningful engagement with diverse audiences.

Role Purpose

The Head of Public Engagement is a new senior role at Crawford Art Gallery, responsible for defining and leading the organisation's audience engagement strategy and its implementation, overseeing visitor and membership services, strategic marketing, communications, brand and digital development, and delivering sustainable public-facing commercial activities.

The role provides strategic leadership across marketing and communications, visitor services, retail, commercial operations, and audience, ensuring a high-quality visitor experience and maximising engagement in support of the organisation's mission and strategic objectives.

The role will play a central part in positioning Crawford Art Gallery as one of Ireland's leading visual art institutions, ensuring that audience engagement, visitor experience, commercial activity and public value are fully integrated into the Gallery's long-term strategic direction.

As Head of Public Engagement, you will lead the Gallery's efforts to reach, welcome, engage, and retain its audiences and visitors.

This role is centred on connection, coherence, and growth, delivered with creativity, discipline, and public accountability.

Reporting and Scope of Role

The Head of Public Engagement is a member of the Senior Leadership Team, reports to the Director, and contributes to organisational strategy, planning, organisational development and governance.

The role has strategic responsibility for audience engagement, marketing and communications, visitor services, retail, events, brand development and digital audience engagement.

The postholder will lead the development of new functions ahead of the Gallery's 2028 reopening, building organisational capability, systems and teams to support a significantly expanded gallery operation.

The role will work collaboratively across all Gallery departments to ensure that audience insights, visitor experience and public engagement inform organisational planning, decision-making and future programme development.



View to Shandon, Crawford Art Gallery, Artistic impression. GA

Phased Delivery Context (2027–2030)

The role will evolve through a number of phases aligned with the Gallery's redevelopment and reopening:

Phase 1: Preparation & Capability Building (2027)

- Establish the strategic framework for planning and delivering audience engagement and visitor-facing activities for the post-redevelopment reopening.
- Build foundations for areas not yet in place (visitor services, retail, events, members), including operating models, staffing structures, policies, systems, and budgets.
- Work with the Marketing & Communications team to evolve strategy, audience insights, brand development, and campaign planning ahead of reopening. Support the development and implementation of a leading brand strategy for the Gallery, ensuring consistency across communications, the visitor experience, and public positioning.
- Lead the development of a comprehensive signage, wayfinding, and interpretive strategy for the redeveloped building, ensuring that visitor navigation and accessibility are fully integrated with the Gallery's brand and visitor experience.
- Oversee the strategic planning and implementation of digital visitor engagement for reopening and beyond, including website redevelopment, digital visitor information, and online content, ensuring a seamless connection between on-site and digital visitor experiences.
- Lead workforce planning, recruitment phasing and capability development for new and expanded teams.
- Contribute to organisational readiness planning, cross-departmental coordination and risk management ahead of reopening.
- Lead the development of audience, visitor and commercial performance frameworks, establishing baseline measures and success indicators ahead of reopening.
- Build strategic partnerships and relationships

Phased Delivery Context (2027–2030)

Phase 2: Pre-Opening & Launch Readiness (2028)

- Lead the final marketing preparations for reopening (late 2028), including the audience launch strategy, marketing and communications, visitor services, and retail and event readiness.
- Oversee testing, refinement and commissioning of new systems, services and visitor-facing operations.
- Support organisation-wide launch activities, stakeholder engagement and public communications.
- Ensure Visitor service and marketing staff are trained, supported and ready before opening.

Phase 3: Embedding & Optimisation (2028–2029)

- Establish new teams, systems, and services, and embed consistent standards.
- Monitor audience behaviour and visitor feedback, and use these insights to refine operations and strategy.
- Evaluate audience development, visitor engagement and commercial performance using qualitative and quantitative evidence to drive continuous improvement.
- Strengthen cross-organisational collaboration and confidence in development to ensure audience expectations are met.
- Develop a sustainable commercial activity model aligned with the Gallery's organisational objectives.

Phase 4: Consolidation & Growth (2030 onwards)

- Consolidate performance across all areas of responsibility, with a focus on sustainability, resilience and continuous improvement.
- Drive longer-term audience growth, income diversification and commercial maturity, aligned with the Gallery's strategic ambitions.
- Support strategic reviews, future planning and further organisational development as required.



Key Responsibilities in the Role

Strategic Development & Income Generation

- Identify and develop long-term audience growth strategies aligned with Crawford Art Gallery's Strategic Plan
- Identify and deliver appropriate visitor engagement supports on site and digitally
- Lead, develop and implement a Development Strategy encompassing audience growth and commercial activity, including events, bookshop and cafe
- Contribute to organisational strategic and annual planning and to reporting to the Board and its subcommittees.
- Work in strategic partnership with the Director and the Board to cultivate relationships with donors and sponsors to support income generation and long-term organisational sustainability
- Develop a pipeline of prospective philanthropic supporters and strategic partners
- Identify opportunities for philanthropic investment arising from programme and audience initiatives.
- Ensure that commercial activity enhances the visitor experience and aligns with the Gallery's mission.
- Ensure audience insights inform organisational planning and future programme development

Marketing, Communications & Brand

- Provide strategic oversight of marketing, communications, PR, and digital activity
- Ensure a strong, coherent brand identity and consistent messaging across all channels.
- Oversee audience development strategies, including targeting, segmentation, and evaluation
- Ensure communications support organisational objectives, accountability, and accessibility commitments
- Use analytics to drive continuous improvement
- Lead the development of audience research, visitor insights and evaluation frameworks to support evidence-based decision-making
- Strengthen Crawford Art Gallery's national and international profile through strategic communications, media engagement and reputation management
- Implement a digital asset management strategy and vision for Crawford Art Gallery to support the company's broader objectives.

Key Responsibilities in the Role

Visitor Experience & Public Engagement

- Lead the delivery of inclusive visitor experience frameworks that reflect national and international best practice
- Ensure visitor services, events, and retail operations align with audience needs and organisational goals
- Champion a visitor-centred culture with an emphasis on access, equality, and inclusiveness, embedded across all services

Philanthropy, Partnerships and Development

- Work in partnership with the Director to develop and implement the Gallery's philanthropy and fundraising strategy
- Identify, cultivate and steward relationships with donors, sponsors and philanthropic partners
- Support the development of compelling funding proposals, sponsorship opportunities for support aligned with organisational priorities
- Build strategic partnerships to enhance the gallery's profile, impact and resilience
- Work collaboratively across the organisation to identify programmes and projects suitable for philanthropic support
- Monitor fundraising performance, partnership outcomes and return on investment, and report progress to the Director and the board as required.

Governance and Accountability

- Work closely with the Head of Finance to support strong governance across functions within this role's remit
- Ensure compliance with applicable public procurement, consumer protection, accessibility and data protection obligations.
- Develop, lead and manage the budgeting process, including income forecasting, budget performance and expenditure planning, in line with Crawford's annual budget
- Monitor performance using clear metrics (reach, engagement, satisfaction, income, and access).
- Ensure all activities comply with Gallery policies, governance frameworks, and relevant regulatory requirements.
- Preparation of timely reports for the SMT and the board as required.
- Contribute to organisational risk management by identifying and managing reputational, financial, and governance risks within the scope of this role's responsibilities.
- Provide effective oversight of contracts and external service providers within the scope of the role.
- Work closely with Head of Operations and facilities to monitor and evaluate visitor experience and satisfaction

Key Responsibilities in the Role

Culture, Values and Ways of Working

- Champion a values-led culture that reflects the Gallery's mission, reputation and public trust obligations
- Foster a culture of collaboration, accountability and continuous improvement across all activities within the areas of responsibility for this role.
- Ensure internal and external relationships are managed with integrity, respect and a long-term stewardship focus.

Team Leadership and Team Management

- Lead, coordinate and provide clear strategic direction and leadership for the various teams (Marketing and Comms, Visitor Services, Bookshop, Events), aligning individual objectives with organisational priorities.
- Recruit, develop, and retain high-performing staff by supporting capability development through training and development.
- Create an environment where staff are empowered, supported and challenged, with clarity around roles, decision-making and responsibility
- Support teams through periods of change and increased complexity within a growing organisation in a sensitive and constructive way
- Lead the ongoing development and maturation of the teams, including systems, processes, capabilities and culture



Mary Swanzy exhibition, Crawford Art Gallery. venividi.ie (pre development)

Essential Requirements

Professional Experience

- Significant senior-level experience in audience development, visitor experience, marketing, communications, cultural management, or a related strategic leadership role.
- Proven track record of leading multidisciplinary teams in a complex organisation
- Demonstrated experience in leadership and in managing teams, budgets and multiple stakeholders.
- Experience in contributing to philanthropy, fundraising, sponsorship or income-generating activities
- A strong track record of designing and delivering successful audience development, engagement, or public participation strategies
- Significant experience leading organisational change, developing new services, or delivering transformational projects.
- Experience developing strategic partnerships across the public, private and community sectors.
- Experience reporting to boards and senior executive teams
- A commitment to inclusion, access, and relevance.
- Articulation skills and an excellent ability to prioritise and manage conflicting demands

Skills & Competencies

- Strategic planning and organisational development capacity
- Excellent relationship-building, influencing, and networking skills with the ability to engage senior stakeholders and partners
- Strong presentation skills
- Commercial awareness balanced with strong public service values
- Ability to interpret audience data and translate insights into organisational strategy.
- Strong strategic thinking and leadership skills appropriate for the Assistant Principal role.
- Excellent communication, influencing and relationship-management skills.
- High level of organisational, planning and problem-solving skills.
- Strong understanding of public service values, accountability, and governance.
- Proven track record in budgeting and financial accountability
- Emotional intelligence, sound judgement, and a collaborative instinct.

Essential Requirements

Knowledge

- Extensive knowledge of audience development, visitor experience, marketing communications and public engagement across the cultural sector.
- Understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion principles within the cultural context
- Knowledge of governance arrangements within publicly funded organisations
- Knowledge of the Irish cultural sector
- Knowledge of public-sector operating environments is desirable.

Desirable Requirements

- Postgraduate qualification in Arts Management, Marketing, Communications, Business, or a related discipline.
- Experience of working with national cultural institutions, museums or galleries
- Experience leading visitor experience, retail or commercial operations
- Understanding of public procurement and governance processes
- Experience of contributing to organisational change or capital redevelopment projects.
- Experience with CRM systems, audience insight platforms, or digital analytics tools

What Success Looks Like

- A new and diverse audience actively engage with the Gallery and regard it as welcoming, relevant and accessible.
- Visitor numbers, engagement and repeat visitors show sustained growth following reopening.
- The gallery has built a strong and expanding network of philanthropic supporters and strategic partners
- Private income and partnership opportunities have increased, supporting the Gallery's strategic priorities
- Crawford Art Gallery is recognised nationally and internationally as a dynamic, visitor-centred national cultural institution
- Commercial activities contribute sustainably to the gallery's long-term resilience while enhancing the visitor experience

Note: This job description is a guide to broad areas of responsibility and accountability and should not be regarded as a comprehensive listing. The job description may be reviewed in the light of new structures and/or the changing needs of the Gallery.



Culture Night, Crawford Art Gallery. Provision (pre development)