

Museums Galleries Scotland

Topic Guide Template

A topic guide is designed to guide a discussion between an interviewer and one or more people. It is not as restrictive as a survey and provides more of an opportunity to explore a topic in detail and probe further the responses given by participants.

This topic guide has been designed to capture feedback on an event to find out what was good about it, how it could be improved and to inform an events programme. You will see that it has a clear structure, ie it starts with an introduction and 'setting the scene' before going into more detail and then closing with final thoughts. Remember when writing your topic guide that it should be informed by your aims and objectives.

The participants have been recruited because they have previously attended an event at your venue.

1. Introduction	
	<i>Aim: to introduce the study and for participants to introduce themselves to the group</i>
	Capture the profile of participants by asking where they live, their age, occupation, whether or not they have children living at home and anything that is specifically relevant to your study. This acts as warm up to let everyone get to know each other as quickly as possible. It is not meant to be intrusive.
2. Events	
	<i>Aim: to explore best practice in terms of events and what influences visits</i>
	The definition of a 'good event' and where provides that. Probe for feedback on where participants have attended other events and where provided that 'good event' experience and why/how.
	Whether the definition of a 'good event' changes dependent on with whom you are visiting i.e. whether visiting accompanied by children etc. Do participants look for something more/different if they are visiting with children?
	What factors are important when considering going to an event ie value for money, something for everyone, a passion for the topic, to have fun and relax, to have a specific learning outcome, key speakers, activities etc? Which of the factors mentioned are the most important and why?

	How do participants find out what's on i.e. when they're generally looking for events what sources do they use/trust/favour and why? Has this changed over time and why ie now that the participants have children, for instance, do they look at different sources?
	Discuss what participants do once they have heard about/seen marketing for an event in which they are interested ie do they then look up a website and/or what else? At that stage, what information are they seeking which will make them consider whether this is an event they actually <u>will</u> attend.
	Whether participants book ahead or wait until the day/day before? What influences this decision? You could ask here, for instance, about the role of Early Bird tickets (if relevant).
3. An Event	
	<i>Aim: to explore attendance at An Event</i>
	Whether first time/repeat visitor to the museum/venue where event took place.
	If the participants are first time visitors to the museum, what did they know about the museum beforehand and why have they not previously visited.
	If participants are repeat visitors to the museum, when did they last visit and why. What do they most enjoy about the museum.
	How/when first made aware that the event was taking place.
	What influenced attendance at the event – probe fully for feedback on programme content, day/time it took place, facilities available etc.
	Expectations prior to attendance: what the name of the event implied, what did they expect to see/do/find out. To what extent the event delivered what was expected. Probe fully for response about what was expected/not expected.
	To what extent the event delivered an experience that was enjoyable, fun, educational, friendly, value for money etc. and which of these was most important/valued?
	What did they most enjoy and did the event live up to expectations?
	Where relevant, ask here for feedback on different elements of your event and how satisfied participants were with each i.e. timing of event, speakers/performers, length of time, cost (if relevant) and value for money, relevance for children (where relevant) etc.

	What participants would have liked to have known about the event prior to their attendance – what was missing from the information provided, what did they experience that would have been good to know ahead of time etc.
	How could the event have been better?
	Likelihood of recommending to others. To whom they would recommend and how they would describe it?
	If the event were to take place again, how likely would they be to return. Ask participants to explain the reasons for their response as it will provide more detail on what was good and what was not so good.
4. Future events	
	<i>Aim: to capture interest in future events at the venue and to identify any suggestions for events</i>
	To what extent participants feel that the event had a 'fit' with the venue ie was this the type of event they would expect to see here.
	Any other events and/or themes participants would suggest for the site perhaps based on previous visits elsewhere. Probe participants fully here because they can provide invaluable insight into what is done well elsewhere from which you can learn.
	Ask participants about timing of events and what is the best time to accommodate families, working adults etc.
	How can the venue best keep participants informed about future events/activities.
5. Final thoughts	
	<i>Aim: to bring the discussion to a close and to capture any final thoughts participants may have</i>
	Bring the discussion to a conclusion by identifying the key messages to emerge from the discussion.
	Ask participants for any final thoughts prior to closing.
	Thank participants for their time.