

OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL

The following information is a step-by-step guide for filling in the Observation Form (coding sheet). You may also watch the video **Observational Toolkit** for help in completing the form.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

At the top right-hand corner is a text box holding information that requests staff to note what station/activity is being observed; date the observation is taking place; the time [to and from] the observation is taking place and the name of the observer. Fill this box out completely as it will help maintain basic information should any details need to be double checked or clarified.

Station/Activity:
Date:
Time:
Observer:

VISITORS AT STATION

The next section asks for basic demographic information. The numbers to be collected are total numbers of visitors from each category that were observed in any one observation [i.e. observing for one 30-minute period, the observer would note how many adult males visited for that period of time, how many females, etc.].

The observation coding breaks down total boys and girls with a further detail of how many of those children were under the age of five [5] and how many were aged between five [5] – twelve [12]. The children section can be broken down into any age range the organization needs to consider. Given this is non-participation observation the person conducting the observation will be required to give a best guess about ages of children.

Repeat Visitors section covers two areas:

- a) The number of people who walked up to and looked at the station/interactive, but did not participate in any way.
- b) Number of people who interact with the space, walk away to participate or do something else then return and interact with the station/interactive again.

VISITORS AT STATION							
ADULTS		CHILDREN				Repeat Visits	
<i>Total Males</i>	<i>Total Females</i>	<i>Total Boys</i>	<i>Total Girls</i>	<i>Total under age 5</i>	<i>Total aged 5-12</i>	<i>No. who visit, look and leave</i>	<i>No. of repeat visitors</i>
5	4	6	3	4	5	2	3

The above table offers an example of how the coding sheet will look after one full 30-minute observation session.



ATTENDANCE LEVEL DURING OBSERVATION PERIOD

Enter a number one (1) in either *Quarter Full*, *Moderate*, or *Extremely Crowded* category to note the level of attendance of visits to the interactive station/activity during the period of observation.

In many instances school groups attend/participate at the same time as other visitors and may not be the focus of the observation. The school group category is intended to identify if they [school groups] are in attendance at the time of the observation. Place number *one* [1] for *yes* and *zero* [0] to indicate no school group presence or otherwise.

SPACE			
ATTENDANCE LEVEL INTERACTIVE SPACE			SCHOOL GROUP
Quarter Full [0-30% capacity]	Moderate [30 – 50%]	Extremely Crowded [60 – 100%]	Present Yes = 1 / No = 0
	1		0

The above table offers an example of how the coding sheet will look after one full 30-minute observation session. It is saying that the level of attendance was moderate and there were no school groups present.

ASSESSING INTERACTIONS

This section is where the main skill of the observer comes into play. The numbers one (1) to five (5) outline the social interactions and are the *Interaction Codes* [I.C.] one may wish to observe. There is no need to have only five (5) codes - there could be more or less. Try not to overcomplicate with too many interactions to observe. This section is always useful to pilot in order to fine-tune the interactions to observe.

The numbers set down the left hand column of the chart are the Interaction Codes and indicate the social interactions. The information across the top of the chart denotes the various ways in which visitors may interact:

Coding:

Interaction Codes [I.C.]

The following codes were used in the FLING study and are not intended to be definitive interactions for other art museums to use. You may change the definition/meaning of the codes for your interactive station's purpose and function.

1. Connection to art museum;
2. Activity initiated by observing others;
3. Read instructional text panel/s;
4. Directed activity;
5. Self-initiated activity



Visitor Interactions

A → C	C → A	C → C	A → A	A	C	A → S	S → A	C → S	S → C
Adult to Child	Child to Adult	Child to Child	Adult to Adult	Adult only	Child only	Adult to Staff	Staff to Adult	Child to Staff	Staff to Child

During the full observation, make a note of how many and what types of interactions are being observed [using only the *Interaction Codes*]. Interactions can be observed as many times as possible and it does not matter if it is the same person or group of people doing the interaction.

To make a note of an interaction, place a mark in the column that fits the observation. For example if an adult is making a connection to the art museum with a child through the art work the child is creating place a 1 under A → C next to *I.C. 1* [as demonstrated in example below].

Continue to do this for the whole 30-minute observation session. At the end of the observation period there will be a varying number of one's [1] in each column, add these up and replace all the one's [1] with the final total. For example if there were six [6] number ones [1] in A → S under *I.C. 5* the table below indicates how the final results will look.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS										
Interaction Codes [I.C.]:										
1. Connection to art museum; 2. Activity initiated by observing others;										
3. Read instructional text panel/s; 4. Directed activity 5. Self-initiated activity										
I.C.	WITH OTHER VISITORS				INDIVIDUAL		WITH STAFF			
	A → C	C → A	C → C	A → A	A	C	A → S	S → A	C → S	S → C
1.	1									
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.							6			

ASSESSING BEHAVIORS



The penultimate section enables the observer to make a note of the visitors who use objects from other stations. This will demonstrate if visitors are making connections with other stations/activities within the interactive space.

Place a final number of how many people used objects from other stations. The example below demonstrates the results of 20 people being observed at a station/activity and how many *used* objects/artwork/ideas from other stations (5).

The technology column only relates to the observation if there is a technological component to the station/activity. If there is a technological component the observer will have to use their discretion about level of comfort within the space.

BEHAVIORS			
USING OBJECTS FROM OTHER STATIONS	TECHNOLOGIES		
YES	<i>Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Comfortable</i>	<i>Very Comfortable</i>
5			

OBSERVER NOTES

The final section, *Observer notes*, enables the observer to make any notes additional to information gathered in observation data sheet. This is an opportunity to have a final comment on anything unusual or not included in the observation that may be important to the final results.

Once the observation has taken place, it is time to enter the data into an Excel spreadsheet.

