

VOLUNTEERING FAQs

This sheet provides answers to some of the frequently asked questions about volunteering at the museum, under these headings:

1. Fixed-term placements (voluntary internships)
2. On-going roles
3. General information about volunteering

1. FIXED - TERM PLACEMENTS

How long are these placements?

They last 3 months, working 1–2 days a week on weekdays. Hours are usually 10 – 5.

When do these placements occur?

There is no set timetable or programme for these voluntary internships. They are advertised when staff need additional support for a project, or when a vacancy occurs. Please don't apply for a placement unless one has been advertised - on the website and via the mailing list.

Can I register my interest in future roles?

Yes, the museum has a mailing list. To add your name, go to the 'Get in Touch' box at the bottom of the volunteering web page.

Typical fixed-term placements include:

- Curatorial Research Assistant – *see sample below*
- Editorial Assistant
- Public Programme Researcher
- Exhibitions Assistant

NB. None of the placements involve designing.

Sample placement

Curatorial Research Assistant

Suitable for: people studying arts, museum studies, design and seeking a career in curating and museums/galleries. This placement is often advertised in the developmental stages of an exhibition.

Tasks involve:

- Researching material, e.g. literature, websites and other exhibitions, related to the chosen theme of the exhibition
- Reporting research findings to the Curator
- Compiling and maintaining a clear record of findings on Excel
- Researching potential partners, e.g. for the loan of objects and exhibits and maintaining records of loans

I'm from outside the European Economic Area (EEA), but I'm on a visa in the UK - can I still volunteer?

If you are from *outside* the EEA and in the UK on a visa, you need to check whether this allows you to volunteer and for how many hours.

If you are from *within* the EEA there are no limits on volunteering.

2. ON-GOING ROLES

These roles have no end date – they end when the volunteer chooses to leave.

What type of on-going role is there?

- Welcomer – *see sample below*
- Family Activity volunteer

I love the museum, but don't know much about design - can I still apply?

Yes, the museum wants to involve a wide range of volunteers and the above opportunities suit people with different levels of knowledge, interest, and experience.

How often would I be asked to volunteer?

The Welcomer role asks for a weekly attendance (weekdays) or fortnightly attendance (weekends), on a 3-hour shift. However, Family Activity volunteers offer their time once a week during school holidays (Mon-Fri).

Sample on-going role

Welcomer

Suitable for: people who enjoy creating a welcoming atmosphere and helping others, understand what good customer service looks like and speak fluent English.

Tasks involve:

- Providing a friendly greeting for all visitors on arrival
- Listening to visitors' needs and helping them plan their day
- Informing visitors about current exhibitions, events & facilities
- Assisting in queue management and greeting large groups e.g. schools
- Becoming familiar with the local area and answering visitors' questions about places to visit and public transport
- Engaging with visitors at an activity table

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

Is there an age restriction to volunteering?

The museum generally involves volunteers aged 18 upwards. There is no upper age limit provided the volunteer is fit to carry out their tasks.

Does volunteering lead to a job at the museum?

Volunteer roles are different from staff jobs and designed to support the museum's work in different ways. They are not created with a view to leading to paid employment at the museum.

I'm registered disabled and/or have additional support needs - can I volunteer?

Yes, the museum aims to ensure it is accessible as possible, and will make reasonable adjustments to allow someone to volunteer where possible.

I am looking for school work experience – do you offer this?

Work experience is different from volunteering. We're sorry, but the museum currently does not have the capacity to offer work experience.

Can volunteers claim travel expenses?

Yes, the museum reimburses *out-of-pocket* travel expenses up to a daily limit of £12. Volunteers are asked to use the cheapest form of travel, e.g. Oyster cards.

How will I be supported whilst volunteering?

All volunteers receive a full induction to the museum and to their role and any necessary training. They receive a Welcome Pack and have a named staff supervisor as their regular point of contact whilst volunteering. After the first 4-6 days volunteering, there is a review meeting where the volunteer and their supervisor share feedback.

What would I get in return for volunteering?

Volunteering offers the opportunity to meet new people, develop skills and experience and learn more about the value of design. Volunteers may also take advantage of a 20% discount in the museum shops and café, free admission to all exhibitions and free tickets to events, when available. They are also invited to the museum team social events at Christmas.

I receive welfare benefits - can I still volunteer?

You can volunteer as long as you receive no payment other than the reimbursement of *out-of-pocket* travel expenses and keep to the rules for getting your benefit(s). You should always inform Jobcentre Plus when starting to volunteer, especially if you are receiving unemployment support.

Can I talk to someone about volunteering at the museum?

Yes, for further information, or queries which are not answered on this sheet or on the website, please use the online form (see 'Get in Touch' box at the bottom of this web page) or phone 020 3862 5875 (Mon-Wed).