

# **Museums and Art Galleries**

**Version 7.17**



# Contents

Introduction.....	2
What roles exist in museums and art galleries? .....	2
How do I find out about careers in museums and art galleries? .....	3
Postgraduate study.....	4
Where do I find vacancies?.....	4
Work Experience/Volunteering/Internships.....	6
Resources available in the Careers Library .....	7
Websites.....	8
Events .....	8

## Introduction

If you would like to work in a museum or art gallery, you need to be passionate about art and objects. However, you also need to understand that the focus for museums and galleries is on placing their collections at the heart of the public realm and finding new ways to ensure that communities fully engage with collections.

Large museums are located in major cities throughout the world and more local ones exist in both cities and towns. There are approximately 290 museums and galleries in the North West region, making it a key location for culture and heritage.

Gaining employment in museums and art galleries is highly competitive, and for some positions a postgraduate qualification is required. The economic climate is particularly challenging at present, as public sector spending cuts have reduced the number of job opportunities in this sector. Many positions require extensive work experience and advertised posts are often short-term or freelance contracts.

## What roles exist in museums and art galleries?

Prospects is a graduate careers website and features occupational profiles. Go to [www.prospects.ac.uk/creative\\_arts](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/creative_arts) to find out about working in the creative arts and cultural sector. You will also find information on the University of Manchester careers service website <http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/whichcareer/media/museumsandgalleries/>

Museum and art gallery roles that are listed include:

- Museum/gallery curator

[www.prospects.ac.uk/museum\\_gallery\\_curator\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/museum_gallery_curator_job_description.htm)

- Museum/gallery exhibitions officer  
[www.prospects.ac.uk/museum\\_gallery\\_exhibitions\\_officer\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/museum_gallery_exhibitions_officer_job_description.htm)
- Museum education officer  
[www.prospects.ac.uk/museum\\_education\\_officer\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/museum_education_officer_job_description.htm)
- Museum/gallery conservator  
[www.prospects.ac.uk/museum\\_gallery\\_conservator\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/museum_gallery_conservator_job_description.htm)
- Heritage Manager  
[www.prospects.ac.uk/heritage\\_manager\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/heritage_manager_job_description.htm)
- Archivist  
[www.prospects.ac.uk/archivist\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/archivist_job_description.htm)

Other roles linked to the sector are included in the Prospects “Types of Jobs” section, for example, under the “Museum/ gallery curator” job role:

- Archaeological conservator
- Archaeological museum keeper

The Museums Association website: [www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org) has a great jobs and careers section and is well worth looking at.

## **How do I find out about careers in museums and art galleries?**

The following organisations feature careers information:

- The Museums Association  
Represents the people and institutions constituting Britain's museums and galleries.  
[www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)
- Association of Independent museums  
[www.aim-museums.co.uk](http://www.aim-museums.co.uk)
- International Council of Museums  
ICOM is the international organisation of museums and museum

professionals

<http://icom.museum>

- English Heritage  
English Heritage exists to protect and promote England's spectacular historic environment and ensure that its past is researched and understood.  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)
- Arts Council England  
[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

## Postgraduate study

Postgraduate study can be useful, and is often a prerequisite, although work experience is of equal importance. Relevant courses include:

- MA Art Gallery and Museum Studies
- MA Art Museum and Gallery Education
- MA Curating
- MSc Heritage and Museum Studies
- PhD Museology

Information on postgraduate courses is available on the Prospects website [www.prospects.ac.uk/search\\_courses.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/search_courses.htm) (use the key word search to type in “museums” and this will take you directly to the courses listed).

## Where do I find vacancies?

- The Guardian features job vacancies in the creative sector.
- The Museums Journal advertises professional jobs in museums and art galleries, such as curators, educationalists, and senior management posts. The Museums Journal is a fortnightly publication (available in the Careers Library).

- The Museums Association website also has a job search section with current listings for use by members. They offer student membership rates.  
[www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)
- The University of Leicester Department of Museum Studies advertises vacancies on their Jobs Desk.  
[www.le.ac.uk/ms/jobs/job\\_titles\\_jobid.htm](http://www.le.ac.uk/ms/jobs/job_titles_jobid.htm)
- Arts Council England advertises vacancies across the arts sector.  
[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)
- Group for Education in Museums (GEM) advertises positions across the heritage and cultural sector.  
[www.gem.org.uk](http://www.gem.org.uk)
- The Institute of Conservation (ICON) advertises conservation jobs through the ICON News job supplement.  
[www.icon.org.uk](http://www.icon.org.uk)
- Check CareersLink for details of vacancies and internships:  
[www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink)
- Local Press sometimes feature advertisements for junior and front-line posts, such as museum assistants and administrators.
- It is also worth looking on Local Council websites as many council-run museums and galleries will advertise positions on their websites e.g. [www.manchester.gov.uk](http://www.manchester.gov.uk) and [www.lgjobs.com/](http://www.lgjobs.com/)
- For vacancies at University owned museums and galleries, check [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk)
- Sign up to social networks, such as LinkedIn and Twitter and join/follow relevant groups.  
<https://twitter.com/artsjobs?lang=en>

## Work Experience/Volunteering/Internships

You are unlikely to get a foot on the career ladder without some work experience, which means becoming a museum or gallery volunteer.

In recent years, there has also been an increase in the number of internships in the museums and galleries sector. The museums association has developed guidelines on internships:

[www.museumsassociation.org/news/16042012-ma-publishes-guidelines-for-internships](http://www.museumsassociation.org/news/16042012-ma-publishes-guidelines-for-internships)

You may wish to check out the following museums, galleries and heritage organisation websites to see what programmes are on offer:

- Victoria and Albert Museum  
[www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)
- Tate  
[www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern](http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern)
- The Wordsworth Trust  
[www.wordsworth.org.uk](http://www.wordsworth.org.uk)
- The National Trust  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteering)
- The Art Fund  
[www.artfund.org](http://www.artfund.org)
- The Manchester Museum, The Whitworth Art Gallery and other Galleries and Museums in and around Manchester also welcome volunteers. Contact local museums to enquire about volunteering opportunities.
- Museums Journal contains occasional requests for volunteers in its Notice board section. But on the whole there is no easy way to find voluntary work - you have to approach individual museums yourself.
- Don't forget to check Volunteer Hub for details of internships and volunteering opportunities:  
[www.find-volunteering.manchester.ac.uk/](http://www.find-volunteering.manchester.ac.uk/)
- Why not follow us on twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/Mcrworkexp> and The Media Club <http://twitter.com/#!/mcrmediaclub>

## **Tips on volunteering**

- Don't limit your efforts to national and large regional museums and galleries. They can sometimes be overwhelmed with requests for voluntary work
- Also apply to smaller local museums as you are likely to get a broader range of experience
- Volunteer to support art festivals and cultural events taking place in your area (The Manchester International Festival and Edinburgh Fringe are good examples of this).
- Treat your request as if you are applying for paid work - find out about the museums you are interested in, visit them if you can and when you contact them explain why you want to volunteer for them.
- Be honest about how much time you have available - you're more likely to find an opening if you are available for the same amount of time each week
- Remember that it's not the amount of experience you gain through volunteering, but what you make of it that will count in your favour when looking to progress your career in museums or galleries. Volunteering is also a great way of building valuable contacts within the sector.

## **Resources available in the Careers Library**

**For a full list of resources use our careers library catalogue**

[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/library](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/library)

- How to get a job in a museum or art gallery
- Museum careers: A practical guide for students and novices
- Museums Journal (Monthly subscription)
- Careers in Art History
- Becoming an Archaeologist
- Archaeo-volunteers: The world guide to archaeological and heritage volunteering

## Websites

- **Culture 24**

The site promotes publicly-funded UK museums, galleries, archives and heritage attractions and seeks to get the message about Britain's great culture to a broad online audience nationally and worldwide.

[www.culture24.org.uk/home](http://www.culture24.org.uk/home)

- Lists venues and events in Manchester and the surrounding area

[www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/manchester/venuesandevents/index.html](http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/manchester/venuesandevents/index.html)

- <http://museumcrush.org/>

- Arts Council England

Works to get more art to more people in more places. The organisation develops and promotes the arts across England, acting as an independent body at arm's length from government.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

- Department for Culture, Media & Sport

This organisation aims to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

## Events

The Careers Service run events which provide an insight into a particular career. Check for ones linked to Museums and Art Galleries on our website:

[www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink)

**This publication is copyright The University of Manchester and may not be produced wholly or in part for commercial or non-commercial purposes without prior permission**