

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Date of issue	January 2014
Schedule for review	Every 2 years
Associated documents (will be available after consultation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering Handbook – issued to all volunteers on joining (public document available online) • Volunteer Supervisor’s Guidelines – available for all Design Museum staff to consult (internal only document)

POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy outlines the Design Museum’s position regarding volunteering and its commitment to:

- Positively and actively engage volunteers in its work.
- Offer fully supported, well-managed volunteer opportunities which mutually benefit the museum and the individual.
- Follow consistent and fair volunteer recruitment and management procedures.
- Provide a duty of care towards its visitors, staff and volunteers.

DEFINITION OF A DESIGN MUSEUM VOLUNTEER

The Design Museum considers a volunteer to be anyone who freely offers their time, skills, experience and enthusiasm, through personal choice and without expectation of financial reward, for the mutual benefit of the museum and themselves.

The museum involves volunteers aged 18 upwards, with limited opportunities on specific activities for young people aged 14-19 years. Currently the museum has no upper age limit provided the volunteer is fit to carry out their tasks.

VOLUNTEERING AT THE DESIGN MUSEUM

At the heart of the Design Museum’s DNA is the vision to inspire everyone to understand the value of design. The museum recognises that volunteers make a significant and valuable contribution to help it to achieve this vision. The museum is committed to providing rewarding and enriching volunteering opportunities and recognises the many positive impacts that involving volunteers has, including:

- Helping to deliver the museum’s vision (above) and mission to create the most exciting, inspiring and engaging design museum in the world.
- Encouraging links between the museum, visitors and the local community and so making people’s design heritage more accessible to them.
- Sharing fresh approaches and different perspectives that reflect the diversity of views, knowledge and experience of society.
- Bringing credibility to the museum – volunteers giving their time for free endorses that its work is of value.
- Acting as ambassadors for the museum’s work.
- Undertaking tasks that add value to all aspects of the museum’s work.

The relationship between the Design Museum and its volunteers aims to be mutually beneficial. Voluntary activity must benefit the museum and its visitors, as well as volunteers. It should not be solely for the benefit of an individual.

RECOGNITION

The Design Museum highly values the involvement of volunteers and aims to recognise volunteer contributions wherever possible, from showcasing their activity to providing learning and social opportunities for them to attend. The museum is committed to providing opportunities for volunteers to gain new skills and experience and supports them by providing advice on further opportunities (where appropriate), as well as references outlining their contributions.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Design Museum is committed to following fair and open recruitment and selection procedures to involve volunteers in accordance with the museum's Equalities and Diversity policy. The museum reserves the right to openly prioritise current students on the joint Design Museum / Kingston University MA in Curating Contemporary Design for certain volunteering positions in the Exhibitions and Curatorial Departments.

Volunteers are primarily recruited to fill specific advertised volunteer roles. The details of unsolicited applications to volunteer are added to the Volunteer Mailing List and informed of opportunities as they come up. From time to time, the museum has other one-off volunteering opportunities which will be recruited for as appropriate to the role.

The Design Museum will ensure that volunteer roles are varied, meaningful and enjoyable, distinct from those undertaken by employees, and clearly defined in a role description. The Design Museum aims to place volunteers in roles compatible with their interests, skills and availability where possible.

Prospective volunteers will be asked to apply by cover letter and CV (exceptions apply for the Design Ventura Industry Experts and young people under age 18). Prospective volunteers from outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) must ensure they have a visa which permits them to volunteer in the UK before applying. Shortlisted individuals may be invited to attend an informal interview. All individuals selected for a volunteer role will be asked to complete a personal details form and provide details of two referees. Some volunteer roles may require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check if they involve volunteering with children or vulnerable adults.

The museum follows best practice guidelines produced by Volunteering England on involving volunteers receiving state benefits. It is the responsibility of the volunteer concerned to seek and follow advice from their benefits advisor before starting to volunteer and the museum will not accept responsibility for this.

It is at the sole discretion of the Design Museum whether or not to accept a prospective volunteer and the museum is under no obligation to offer a volunteer any task.

It is expected that both the museum and the volunteer will give as much notice as possible if unable to meet the expectations laid out in the role description.

PAID EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers compliment the work of employees. Volunteers are not a substitute for paid employees and the museum does not recruit volunteers to replace them. Design Museum volunteers shall at no time be considered as, or have status as, employees of the museum.

Within the arrangement between the museum and a volunteer, nothing is intended to create the relationship of an employer and employee. Both the museum and the volunteer are free to terminate the arrangement at any time following the appropriate procedures outlined for volunteers in the Volunteer Handbook and for staff in the Volunteer Supervisor's Guidelines.

Design Museum employees may volunteer if the volunteer role is significantly different from their normal employed duties and outside of their normal working hours. Permission should be sought from their line manager, Head of Department and the Volunteer and Community Development Manager before proceeding.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

The museum is committed to ensuring its volunteers are fully prepared for their roles through the provision of appropriate induction, training and supervision. All volunteers receive a volunteer handbook and general induction upon joining which are signed to confirm receipt. Role-related training and access to other relevant training and development opportunities is organised as required. All training is arranged at mutually convenient times.

COMMUNICATION, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

The museum aims to ensure that all volunteering experiences are interesting, rewarding, enjoyable and well-supported. Volunteers will be assigned a member of staff to act as their supervisor for each role they undertake during their time at the museum. Volunteers can also contact the Volunteer and Community Development Manager with any queries. The museum encourages feedback from volunteers and will provide a range of opportunities to exchange constructive feedback.

REMOTE VOLUNTEERING

Most volunteer roles will be based at the Design Museum, either in public spaces or hot-desking in the office, but others may require the volunteer to work away from the museum at other sites and/or at home. All volunteer roles based off site or at home will be clearly identified as such when advertised and appropriate systems put in place to fully support those volunteering remotely.

VOLUNTEER EXPENSES

It is museum policy to reimburse previously agreed and receipted out-of-pocket expenses to volunteers to and from the museum, and refreshments at special events. The museum has a consistent approach to volunteer expenses. The full procedure for reimbursement is outlined for volunteers in the Volunteer Handbook and for staff in the Volunteer Supervisor's Guidelines.

PROBLEM SOLVING

The Design Museum aims to ensure that, as far as possible, the involvement of volunteers is a positive experience for everyone and that all volunteers are treated fairly, objectively and consistently. The museum aims to take every reasonable step to resolve any problems as quickly and amicably as possible through informal discussion, additional training and support, or by offering alternative volunteer roles. Where a problem cannot be resolved through these methods or it is deemed a serious breach of conduct or policy, the museum may ask a volunteer to leave the programme. All matters relating to complaints by or about volunteers will be treated in confidence.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The museum recognises its responsibilities and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 to maintain the confidentiality of any personal, sensitive and confidential information it holds on volunteers and has rigorous procedures in place to safeguard this information. The museum only retains information about volunteers which is necessary to ensure volunteering is an appropriately documented and safe activity. The museum respects the privacy of its volunteers and does not pass personal details on without consent unless legally obliged to. Volunteers should inform their supervisor of any changes in personal information.

Volunteers are required to treat as confidential any information they come into contact with whilst volunteering that relates to the museum, its staff, volunteers, donors, partner organisations, policies and practices. Volunteers should not disclose information or use it for their own or another's benefit without the consent of the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless it has been made public as a result of the volunteer's breach of confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires disclosure.

COPYRIGHT

All written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically, which was made or acquired by a volunteer during the course of volunteering is the property and copyright of the Design Museum.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The museum recognises and takes its responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for its employees, volunteers and visitors very seriously. Volunteers are advised that everyone has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to safeguard their own health and safety, and that of any other person who may be affected by their actions.

Volunteers are provided with general health and safety information at induction, and specific training as appropriate to each role. Volunteers are required to observe the museum's Health and Safety/Fire Safety policies and procedures and to report any potential hazards, unsafe working conditions or personal injuries to a museum employee. Volunteers should not work outside their authorised area or tasks.

SECURITY

Volunteers are provided with information on the museum's security procedures at induction and are required to comply with these to help ensure the general security of the museum's buildings, property and work environment. Volunteers are issued with a Design Museum volunteer pass which they are requested to carry with them whilst volunteering and wear when volunteering in public areas so that they are easily identified.

EQUALITY AND ACCESS

The museum is committed to upholding the principles of equality, diversity and equal opportunity in all of its volunteering activity and management. All recruitment, selection, training and development procedures aim to ensure volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible and that individuals are selected and treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities, and suitability for the role. The museum is committed to developing a diverse volunteer team, and where required, the museum will make reasonable adjustments to volunteer roles where possible. The museum expects both employees and volunteers to understand and promote its Equalities and Diversity and Access Policies in their own roles.