

volunteering – frequently asked questions

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at the Design Museum. We hope that the information in these 'Frequently Asked Questions' will give you a better insight into volunteering with us.

What roles are available for Volunteering?

Roles may take many forms, but there two broad types of volunteering opportunities, volunteering internships and ongoing roles:

Volunteering internships

These are fixed term placements, usually limited to 3 months and for 1- 2 days a week, working 10am – 5pm and include roles such as:

- ✚ Curatorial Research Assistant
- ✚ Editorial Assistant
- ✚ Public Programme Researcher
- ✚ Exhibitions Assistant

These placements are suitable for people studying art, museum studies or design and seeking a career in curating and museums/galleries.

This placement is often advertised in the developmental stages of an exhibition. You could be involved in:

- ✚ Researching material 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, eg for the loan of objects and exhibits and maintaining records of loans

On-going roles

These opportunities have no end date and include roles such as:

Welcomer: which involves a weekly attendance (weekdays) or fortnightly attendance (weekends), on a 3-hour shift. This would suit someone who people who enjoy creating a welcoming atmosphere and helping others, understand what good customer service looks like and speak fluent English.

You could be involved in:

- ✚ 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

Family Activity volunteer: where volunteers are required once a week during school holidays (weekdays)

Sample on-going role Welcomer Suitable for:

- ✚ Providing information about the local area and answering visitor’s questions about places to visit and public transport
- ✚ Engaging with families at an activity table

How can I find out what opportunities there are for volunteering at the moment?

When we have volunteering opportunities, we publish the details on our Design Museum Careers Website

How much time will I need to commit?

On a voluntary internships/fixed term placement we normally provide volunteering for up to 3 days per week, for a maximum of 3 months. This allows volunteers to pursue other opportunities, or to earn a living. For ongoing roles, placements are normally either weekly or fortnightly and for one or two sessions per week/fortnight

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 are the benefits to volunteering and do the Design Museum offer any other benefits?

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 25% 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.

I’m on a visa in the UK - can I still volunteer?

If you do not have a British Passport and you are in the UK on a visa, you need to check whether this allows you to volunteer and for how many hours.

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.

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 but of course you are welcome to apply for any suitable vacancies that are advertised.

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, and unfortunately we do not have the capacity to offer work experience.

How old do I have to be to volunteer?

The museum involves volunteers from the age of 18 upwards.

Can volunteers claim travel expenses?

Yes! Provided you are able to provide receipts, you will be able to claim up to £12 per day towards your travel expenses.

I receive welfare benefits - can I still volunteer?

You can volunteer if 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.

