

Staff Handbook Section
G13

Volunteering at the
V&A

A guide for applicants

V&A

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Guidance for Volunteering applicants

To be read in conjunction with the V&A's policy on Volunteering

Introduction

1. This guidance is for individuals interested in applying for volunteering opportunities at the V&A.
2. Volunteering is possible in a number of departments at the V&A and across a wide range of activities. Volunteering is unpaid and does not involve contractual obligations; there is no obligation for the V&A to offer work or for the volunteer to attend work.
3. Volunteering opportunities are advertised on the V&A recruitment website <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/jobs/apply> and applications for volunteering should be made via this web portal.

Information regarding **jobs, internships and work experience opportunities** at the V&A is also available on the V&A recruitment website.

Application process for volunteering

4. If you wish to proceed with an application for a volunteering opportunity advertised on the Museum website, please complete the on-line application process according to these guidelines. Should you be unable to complete the on-line application, please email hr@vam.ac.uk or telephone HR on 020 7942 2937. Please note that speculative applications will not be accepted.
5. To ensure your application is processed:
 - it must be made on the **Volunteering Application Form**
 - the Volunteering Application Form must be completed in full and you must supply all the additional information listed (CV, Applicant's Statement, contact details for referees)
 - you must clearly indicate your area of interest

Visa requirements

6. The V&A is unable to provide sponsorship for visas for the purposes of volunteering and work experience. If you have a passport from a non EEA country before you apply for a volunteering opportunity you must:
 - check with the British Embassy in your country regarding visa and entry requirements (even unpaid or voluntary work is regarded as working in the UK);
 - check online at the UK Border Agency at: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/> that your information is correct and up to date
 - it is your responsibility to make all subsequent arrangements regarding work or study visas.

7. EEA or Swiss Nationals have the right to work in the UK and do not need a visa.

Selection process for volunteering

8. The selection process:

- usually takes approximately a month, although this can vary
- on receipt of your fully completed application, the information is made available to managers, with the exception of the equalities monitoring form which does not form part of the decision-making process, but which is kept in HR for monitoring purposes only.
- if your application is successful you will then be contacted directly by the manager who will supervise your possible volunteering opportunity
- selected candidates may be invited to attend an interview or informal meeting in the relevant V&A department
- for candidates from outside the UK, who are not able to attend for an interview, a telephone interview can be arranged
- applicants will be notified of the outcome as soon as possible.

9. All data is held in accordance with the V&A's Data Protection Policy.

10. Unfortunately we do not have the resources to respond to individual applicants who are not selected to participate in the selection process. If you have not heard from us within a period of two months, please assume your application has been unsuccessful.

11. Volunteering is unpaid and the V&A can offer no financial support to volunteers.

12. If you would like us to accommodate a flexible pattern of working while volunteering, e.g. in order to undertake paid part-time work, please indicate this on your application.

Volunteers under the age of 18

13. If you are aged under 18 then we may need to ask for the consent of your parent or guardian before you begin volunteering with us.

14. You will not be left unattended while you are volunteering and will be supervised, at all times, by two or more adults.

Successful applicants

15. If successful, you will receive:

- an offer and confirmation of the dates, together with a **Volunteering Agreement**, which should be signed and returned. Please keep a copy for your reference. The agreement is not intended as a legally binding contract between you and the V&A and it may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. No employment

relationship is intended at any time and no form of remuneration will be given.

- a number of forms for completion -
 - Emergency Contact form
 - Self Disclosure form and Application for Temporary Pass
 - Guidance notes for Basic Disclosure for Security Vetting.

- If there are any changes in your primary contact email address, your living address or telephone number after you apply, please ensure you inform us immediately in case we need to get in touch with you. If we cannot get in touch with you during the period of six weeks prior to the start of the volunteering opportunity, or for a period of one month at any point from receipt of your acceptance of this offer to six weeks prior to the start your opportunity, we will have to withdraw this offer and consider other candidates for this vacancy. If any problems prevent you from taking up our offer, please let us know as soon as possible.

Security vetting

16.If you are a successful candidate you will be required to complete a Security Vetting process, including a **Basic Disclosure form**.

17.If you are applying from abroad, in line with Home Office guidance we will need to verify and take a copy of your original ID documentation as evidence of your right to work in the UK. All information is treated in the strictest confidence. The information you provide will be stored in accordance with the V&A's Data Protection Policy.

Beginning the Volunteering Opportunity

18.When you begin volunteering at the V&A, you should receive a short induction including:

- an introduction to the V&A, its history, services, culture and values
- an overview of the V&A and department structure
- an introduction to members of your team
- a tour of your facilities, work areas, canteen , fire exits, etc
- Safety information
- Policies on the Museum intranet site that you are required to observe.

Tasks

19.Your volunteering opportunity is intended to be interesting, rewarding and developmental. To achieve this:

- you should receive a role description, outlining the role requirements and the short and long-term objectives of the opportunity and/or projects
- you should be provided with tasks that develop your skills, although of course there will be some basic tasks that you are required to do as there are in most jobs
- you and your supervisor should discuss a work plan or schedule which contributes to your objectives, acts as a guide and is open to revision

- you may be asked to work across a number of different areas within the department
- we aim to give you as much diversity in your tasks as possible
- we aim to provide you with some flexibility, for example to attend job interviews, or to complete study requirements.

20. While there are no contractual obligations, you are expected to make a reasonable commitment to meet the mutually agreed schedule.

Supervision

21. You will be allocated a person to supervise you and to conduct regular reviews on your performance in terms of achievements, conduct and future development. You may also be given a mentor to give you more informal support and guidance, and to act as the first point of contact for concerns. In addition the mentor may be able to assist you with advice on different career paths and progression routes. (Your supervisor and mentor may be the same person.)

Trial period

22. A short, trial period will give both you and the V&A time to discover if you are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end.

Expectations of behaviour, disputes and complaints

23. You are expected to be courteous and respectful to staff and other volunteers during your opportunity.

24. You are expected to follow the V&A's rules and procedures, including security, health and safety, diversity, electronic communications and confidentiality. Where your opportunity involves working with young people or vulnerable adults, you will be expected to follow V&A safeguarding guidelines for working with children or young people.

25. It is the intention that volunteering opportunities are enjoyable and rewarding to all parties. Any problems that may arise on either side should be resolved through informal discussion. Supervisors and other Museum staff will observe the basic principles of fairness in dealing with any issues of capability or conduct that may arise, pointing out any shortcomings in performance and giving opportunity for improvement. The HR department will give advice on issues that are serious.

26. If the issues prove to be irreconcilable, either side has the option to terminate the arrangement with immediate effect.

27. The Museum reserves the right to terminate a volunteer agreement immediately should you be guilty of gross misconduct or any negligence resulting in loss or damage to the organisation.

Copyright

28. You will be asked to donate to the V&A the copyright to any original works you are requested to produce whilst undertaking your volunteering opportunity.

Leaving the V&A

29. When you cease volunteering at the V&A you may be invited to a review meeting with your supervisor, to discuss your experience in the department and the Museum. Your manager may give an evaluation of the opportunity, and may provide a reference or record of activities, detailing the dates of the opportunity, and what it entailed.

30. You may also be invited to give feedback regarding your experiences in an exit interview.