

Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Visitor Services Assistant
Division	Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM)
Department	Oxford University Museum of Natural History
Location	Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3PW
Grade and salary	Grade 2 £17,079 - £19,202 per annum pro rata
Hours	15 hours per week (Tues 8.30-5.30pm, Sat 9.30-5.30pm)
Contract type	Permanent
Reporting to	Front of House Manager
Vacancy reference	138744
Additional information	

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities. Income from external research contracts in 2016/17 exceeded £564m and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, with more than 130 companies created to date. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation

Gardens, Libraries and Museums

The Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM), a group of six departments led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (GLAM), comprises the University's major collections: the Bodleian Libraries, the four museums – Ashmolean, History of Science, Natural History, and Pitt Rivers – and the Botanic Garden & Harcourt Arboretum. Both individually and collectively, the collections are integral to the delivery of the University's strategic aims of teaching, research and widening participation. Whilst each collection maintains a distinct individual identity, GLAM also works collectively where practicable to ensure sustainability and consistency of standards.

For more information please visit: <https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk>

Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Oxford University Museum of Natural History was opened in 1860 and houses the University's extensive scientific holdings of natural history, which are used for research, teaching, and public engagement with science. The holdings are currently organised into three collection areas: Earth, Life and Print & Digital. The Museum is 'Designated' by Arts Council England as having collections of national and international importance, and these comprise around 7 million specimens that are second in importance only to the national collections. The building, which is Grade 1-listed, is regarded as one of the finest examples of Victorian architecture in Britain, with its glass roof supported by iron pillars, and internal decoration that has a strong association with the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

The Museum is one of the most visited science museums in the UK with over 780,000 visitors per year, including over 37,000 school visitors, making it the most popular non-national science museum in the UK and the second most visited university museum in the world (behind the Ashmolean). The public engagement team have a national reputation for excellence and innovation, and offer a wide range of programming to a diverse audience base from under 5s through to older learners. The public engagement team works closely with the collections, research and operations teams to deliver the museum's ambitious strategic plan.

The museum programmes a series of contemporary science and society exhibitions. This series aims to connect the research power of academic departments with the University of Oxford with the very large audiences visiting the museum. This connection between research and the public is enabled by the third distinctive ingredient – the multiple award-winning public engagement team of the museum, in partnership with public engagement officers embedded within the departments. Together, these three components provide the University of Oxford with a unique combination of capabilities and opportunities for public engagement in research. Each inter-disciplinary exhibition is based around a theme relating to the science of the natural environment that aims to draw together different strands of research from across the academic divisions, preferably in an area that has societal relevance or controversy, and aims to make complex concepts and datasets accessible to the general public in a balanced but authoritative way.

Earth Collections. There are in excess of 350,000 fossil specimens in the museum, including over 4,700 type and figured specimens. Of particular importance are the Lower Palaeozoic invertebrates, the Jurassic vertebrates (including dinosaurs and marine reptiles) and Lyell's Tertiary molluscs. The collections also include around 33,000 minerals, meteorites and gemstones, and 100,000 petrological specimens of worldwide provenance.

Life Collections. Five million entomological specimens, with 30,000 catalogued types, constitute a globally leading entomology collection. They include major historic British collections, and foreign collections covering most orders, but are particularly strong in Old World butterflies, cockroaches and bees. There is also the important Pickard-Cambridge spider collection. The other zoology collections contain an estimated 300,000 specimens, including over 1,000 type and figured specimens. Most important are the worldwide collections of mammals, birds, and crustaceans, and internationally significant collections of other marine invertebrates. The Life Collections include historically and scientifically important material collected by the Tradescants, Darwin, Wallace and Livingstone. Only a small part of the collections is on public display in the museum court, and the majority of specimens are held in a variety of onsite and offsite stores.

Print & Digital. The archives contain internationally important material relating to the development of natural history, particularly geology and entomology, from the Enlightenment through the 19th century and into the 20th.

Current research within the museum includes is centred on four themes: animal origins, arthropod evolution, digital morphology, and heritage, culture & society. Related collections-based research is also undertaken in the nearby Department of Earth Sciences (www.earth.ox.ac.uk), the Department of Zoology (www.zoo.ox.ac.uk) and the School of Archaeology (www.arch.ox.ac.uk).

For more information about the museum, please visit: www.oumnh.ox.ac.uk .

Overview of the role

The Front of House team is the welcoming face of the Museum of Natural History and an integral part of the visitor experience and the Museum's Visitor Giving Project. The Visitor Services Assistants (VSAs) work together to ensure a high level of customer care in their welcome and wider communication with Museum's 780,000 annual visitors, providing information and requesting donations which support the Museum's activities.

The post-holder must have experience of working in visitor services, either at a museum, gallery or heritage site, at a reception, or in another customer-focussed environment. The VSA position requires excellent interpersonal skills, a professional attitude and a flexible approach to the role. The Museum is a vibrant and busy working environment and the Front of House team is required to be approachable and adaptable.

In addition to the fixed hours set out on the first page of the job description, the post-holder must be willing to cover additional evening events. If working weekends, the post-holder will be required to stay on site over lunch to assist with emergency procedures if needed (this is regarded as paid-time).

Responsibilities

Reception and welcome

- Acts as a first point of contact for all visitors to the Museum, providing an excellent welcome and ensuring a high standard of customer service
- Helps support the Museum by encouraging donations and the sale of visitor guides and other products
- Provides a helpful, informative and efficient service to all visitors and staff while resolving any issues in a calm and diplomatic manner
- Liaises with education staff and volunteers and act as the first point of contact for weekend volunteers
- Refers external enquiries to the relevant section of the Museum, including phone enquiries
- Works in partnership with neighbouring departments, including the Pitt Rivers Museum
- Ensures the Museum is always presented at its best, including keeping areas clean and tidy, identifying and dealing with trip and slip hazards and ensuring visitor guides and leaflets are kept well-stocked.

Security and safety

- Interprets and enforce the Museum's policies in a sensible and sensitive but firm manner and uses judgement on challenging individuals or groups under the Museum's policies
- The post-holder is expected to be a nominated first-aider, first-aid training will be provided
- Play a role in evacuating visitors safely from the Museum should an emergency arise
- Is responsible for opening and closing the building at the start and end of each day
- Remains aware of all people entering the Museum (visitors, Museum staff, University staff and students, contractors)
- Carries out regular patrols of the building
- Liaises with the University's central security team, including on car parking matters.

Other

- Undertakes event duties required by conference and reception organisers under the direction of the Events Manager
- Moves furniture and sets up rooms/areas, sets up AV equipment when necessary
- Observes and reports faults and defects in the fabric, services and decoration of the building to the Building Manager
- Records and processes object identification enquiries
- Records visitor numbers from the electronic visitor counter
- Occasional cash counting duties.

Selection criteria

Essential

1. Excellent customer service and interpersonal skills and ability to communicate with a wide range of people
2. The ability to remain calm under pressure and use sound judgement to make decisions in a busy environment
3. A confident and proactive manner to ask for visitor donations and make conversions to Gift Aid when appropriate
4. Experience of working in a busy visitor attraction, heritage site or retail environment
5. Experience of working successfully in a team and with a wide range of people
6. Reliability and good time-keeping skills
7. Experience/an understanding of health and safety, security and housekeeping issues
8. IT skills
9. Ability to lift and move furniture, signs and AV equipment.

Desirable

1. Responsibility for dealing with the building security
2. An interest in the Museum of Natural History and its Collections
3. Second language skills.

How to apply

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'Tips on applying for a job at the University of Oxford' document, at www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/.

If you would like to apply, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a new user or log-in if you have applied previously. Please provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will also be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants).

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing departments.

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments)

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk. Further help and support is available from [www.ox.ac.uk/about the university/jobs/support/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/support/). To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic emails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all emails.

Important information for candidates

Pre-employment screening

Please note that the appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post. This will include right-to-work, proof of identity and references. We advise all applicants to read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures, found at: www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/.

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at:
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts. From 1 October 2017, the University has adopted an EJRA of 30 September before the 69th birthday for all academic and academic-related staff in posts at **grade 8 and above**. The justification for this is explained at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/.

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at **grades 1–7** have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of Opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club provides social, sporting and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

Information for international staff

The University offers support and advice to international staff, including a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation and local schools. See www.welcome.ox.ac.uk.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff to settle into Oxford and to provide them with an opportunity to meet people in the area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Childcare

The University has excellent childcare services with five University nurseries, as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries. For full details including how to apply and the costs, see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare.

Family-friendly benefits

The University subscribes to My Family Care service through which staff are eligible to register for emergency back-up childcare and adultcare services, a 'speak to an expert' advice service and a wide range of guides and webinars through a website called the Work+Family space. See: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/.

Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff.

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/networks/.

Additional benefits

Staff can enjoy a range of other benefits and discounts, including free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits.