

ABERDEEN ART GALLERY & MUSEUMS



ABERDEEN ART GALLERY



ABERDEEN MARITIME MUSEUM



PROVOST SKENE'S HOUSE



THE TOLBOOTH MUSEUM

Becoming a Volunteer

Your guide to volunteering at Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums



INTRODUCTION

What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who commits time and energy for the benefit of others, who does so freely, through personal choice and without expectation of financial reward.

Who are we?

Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums form part of the directorate of Education, Culture and Sport within Aberdeen City Council. We operate the following venues:

- Aberdeen Art Gallery
- Aberdeen Maritime Museum
- Provost Skene's House
- The Tolbooth Museum
- Cowdray Hall

These venues feature the city's permanent collections and host an annual programme of exhibitions, displays, events and activities

We also have two Collections' storage facilities outwith the main public venues.

Why do we use volunteers?

There are many reasons we involve volunteers:

- They provide additional resources allowing us to undertake new projects and increase our capacity to deal with existing ones.
- They raise our profile within the community.
- They can bring a fresh approach which includes diversity of knowledge and experience.
- They can bring a different perspective to our work, often one that reflects the views of the local community.
- Using volunteers demonstrates both our willingness to provide access to our collections and our commitment to lifelong learning.
- By allowing volunteers to gain experience of work in a museum we can help provide a route to further training, study or employment.

Who can volunteer with us?

We welcome applications for volunteer work from anyone aged over 18. However, most of our volunteers fall into one of the following groups:

- College/university students and leavers interested in a career in museum work.
- Retired and unemployed people interested in using their existing skills or acquiring new ones.
- People recruited for a specific, short-term project.

We only take volunteers under the age of 18 through established school placement programmes.

What kind of volunteering opportunities do we offer?

We offer a range of volunteer placements. These are some of the tasks and projects we may look for volunteers to assist with:

- Scanning of images for our digital catalogue.
- Assisting with packing and moving objects.
- Adding data to our catalogue.
- Specialist research on specific areas of the collection.
- Conducting audience research in our venues.
- Assisting visitors in special exhibitions.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

Recruitment and Selection

When you are applying for voluntary work with us you will be asked to fill in a simple application form saying why you are interested in joining our volunteer programme.

The staff member responsible for supervising you will be asked to conduct an informal interview to assess your skills, knowledge and capabilities and to see if they are suited for the roles which could be offered you.

We will ask all volunteers to provide references and these must be obtained before a volunteer can commence work.

We will select volunteers based on the requirements of the service at the time. If we do not have any opportunities that you meet your skill-set we will let you know and offer to keep your details on file should new opportunities arise in the future.

Equal Opportunities

We recognise that Equal Opportunities is not about treating everyone the same; it is about treating people fairly but differently according to their need. We will assess the needs of prospective volunteers so that they can be offered work that is appropriate and that does not discriminate against them. Recruitment to our volunteer programme will be in accordance with the Equality Act (2010).

Induction

At the start of your placement you will be given an induction. This will include information on the venue and its role within Aberdeen City Council, health and safety protocol, practical arrangements and introduction to other members of the team.

At your induction we will assess if you have any training needs to help you in your voluntary role. If training needs are identified, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums will make suitable arrangements for these to be addressed.

At the end of your induction we will ask you to sign a Volunteer Agreement form. This sets out in writing what was covered in your induction as well as your rights and responsibilities.

ABERDEEN ART GALLERY & MUSEUMS

Confidentiality

At your induction you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. This is to protect our staff, collections and venues.

Your personal details will be stored in accordance with current Data Protection laws and will be treated in the same way as information held on paid members of staff.

Support and Supervision

Your supervisor will be your main point of contact during your volunteer placement. Your supervisor will provide instructions on tasks, carry out your induction and assess your training needs.

During your placement you will work with members of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums staff, all of whom will be happy to support and assist you as necessary.

Health and Safety

You have the same rights and responsibilities as paid members of staff with regards to Health and Safety.

You will be provided with necessary Health and Safety information at your induction. This will include information on:

- VDU and workstation
- Avoiding slips, trips and falls
- Safe manual handling
- Fire safety and evacuation

If necessary, we will provide you with safety equipment such as protective eye-wear, high visibility clothing, gloves etc.

Security

You are required to wear a Volunteer ID badge at all times while working at one of our venues.

You must sign-in to the building when you arrive and sign-out when you leave. You will be shown where to do this during your induction.

If you are working in one of our collections' stores you will need to ask a member of staff to unlock the area for you. Keys to the stores are only given to selected members of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums staff.

IT

All volunteers log-on to Aberdeen City Council's IT system using a Volunteer Username and Password.

If your placement requires internet access, your supervisor will arrange this for you. You must abide by Aberdeen City Council's Internet Acceptable Usage policy, which will be shared with you when you start your volunteer assignment.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by Aberdeen City Council's Public and Employees' Liability Insurance.

Expenses

We will not normally pay volunteers' expenses for travelling to and from, or meals taken at, your normal place of volunteering. You are however welcome to discuss reimbursement for expenses with your supervisor if you believe exceptional circumstances apply.

Grievance Procedure

If you have a grievance with a member of staff your first point of contact will be your supervisor. If you have a grievance with your supervisor your first point of contact will be with their line manager. Where possible we aim to resolve differences through informal discussions. Where this is not possible Aberdeen City Council's Managing Grievance Policy and Procedure will apply.

Termination of Volunteer Placement

You have the right to withdraw from your volunteer placement at any time, but we ask you to give us at least one week's notice.

We may ask you to leave under the following circumstances:

- If the project you are working on has come to an end and there is no other suitable work available.
- If resources within our service are reduced meaning that we cannot support as many volunteers.
- If there is a breakdown of trust or you are deemed to have broken the conditions of the Volunteer Agreement.