Curator

*This is a general description, and duties may vary based on the museum's specific needs. It’s always important to tailor position descriptions to fit your organization's unique needs and culture.*

Position: Museum Curator

Reports To: Museum Director, Deputy Directory, or Director of Collections

Potential Staff Reporting to this Position: Curatorial Assistant, Preparator, Exhibitions Coordinator

Job Description

The museum curator is responsible for developing, researching, and growing the museum's collections and related exhibitions. This includes collection and provenance research for the acquisition and interpretation of the collection.

Responsibilities:

* Collections Management: Overseeing the intellectual elements associated with the acquisition, accessioning, documentation, deaccessioning, and preservation of the museum's collections. Through thorough research, consulting experts, and collaborating with specialists to avoid misinformation, curators verify artifacts' provenance, authenticity, and historical accuracy.
* Exhibition Development: Planning, developing, and implementing permanent and temporary exhibitions. This includes drafting and editing labels and wall text to tell a narrative about a particular topic.
* Research: Researching objects in the museum's collections and exhibitions for potential acquisition, including provenance and authenticity, and learning the complete history of each object.
* Public Engagement: Delivering educational programs related to collections and exhibitions for various audiences.
* Staff Supervision: Supervising a small team of museum staff and volunteers.
* Administration: Assisting with grant writing, budgeting, and strategic planning.

Qualifications:

* Experience in museum curation and administration.
* Strong research and writing skills.
* Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
* Project management skills, including managing budgets.
* A degree in museum studies, history, art history, or a related field may be beneficial but is not always necessary.

(Note: Some museums include a statement under the qualifications section encouraging all to apply to incentivize a more diverse set of candidates. Here is an example from the Adventure Science Center in Nashville, TN, “While we’ve listed our ideal qualifications, we value individual competence, experience, and enthusiasm for our mission. We encourage all who think they are a good match for the role to apply.”)

Skills

Consider the following set of essential skills that museum curators need. Even without direct experience in a similar position, someone with these skills could accomplish the necessary tasks:

1. Collaboration & Communication: Collaborating with colleagues and communicating complex ideas to diverse audiences. Interdisciplinary knowledge and the ability to make connections across different fields of study.
2. Interpersonal Skills: Building rapport with diverse stakeholders, asking thoughtful questions, and being open to feedback.
3. Critical Thinking: Critically evaluating physical objects, sources, and research findings, making informed decisions about those items, and assessing potential cultural and ethical implications.
4. Problem-Solving: Navigating complex ethical and social considerations, identifying issues, and finding solutions with sensitivity and awareness.
5. Time Management: Strong project management skills. Coordinating timelines, budgets, and resources.
6. Adaptability & Innovation: Conceptualizing, creating interpretive content, and developing engaging and informative contexts.
7. Technical Proficiency: Using digital tools and technologies for research, project management, and digital storytelling.
8. Attention to Detail: Having a deep understanding of a particular subject, be it art history, history, natural history, or material culture, and strong research skills are essential.
9. Practical Application: Proficiency in research and writing.