

British Museum

Policy on Volunteering

1. The Museum welcomes public participation in its work and recruits volunteers¹ from the diverse communities in London, the regions and further afield regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, nationality, religious/political belief or disability.
- 2 The relationship between volunteers and the Museum does not create a legally binding contract, and the Museum accepts the volunteers on the understanding that their services are received at its sole discretion, and that any volunteer's relationship with the Museum may be terminated by either side at any time for whatever reason.
- 3 Volunteers are not a substitute for employees and the Museum does not recruit volunteers to displace them. A volunteer accepting full or part time employment in the Museum shall not be expected to continue his/her voluntary work. The Museum accepts the services of its own staff as volunteers only if the voluntary tasks are offered without coercion, involve assignments entirely outside the scope of the normal employment duties of the staff concerned and are provided outside their usual working hours.
- 4 Volunteers are supervised by Museum staff, and do not have the authority to represent the Museum, make contracts for the Museum or make any other commitment on its behalf. Letters and other communications written by volunteers must be authorised by a member of the Museum's permanent staff of appropriate seniority and authority.
- 5 Volunteers aged less than 18 years must have the prior written consent of their parents or guardians.
- 6 The Museum asks that volunteers be willing to:
 - help the Museum achieve its Aim and objectives and share its universal vision;
 - submit to any health screening or physical assessments necessary to assess their suitability to undertake particular activities;
 - submit to criminal record checks (and additional checks if tasks involving children or other vulnerable visitor groups are to be undertaken);

¹ A volunteer is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation (other than reimbursement of expenses) performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the Museum.

- attend any support, training or supervision sessions useful for the tasks to be undertaken, their personal development or to meet health and safety requirements;
- work as team members with other volunteers and staff under the overall control of a designated task manager;
- tell their task manager if they believe the performance of any task may be a problem to themselves or others;
- carry out agreed tasks and commit the time and the energy required;
- dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of assigned tasks;
- be courteous and helpful to Museum visitors;
- follow notified volunteer guidelines, grievance procedures and other Museum rules and procedures;
- maintain the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information of the Museum to which they are exposed while carrying out assignments²;
- uphold the name of the British Museum;
- assign all copyright to the Museum in any original work created by them on behalf of the Museum².
- confirm that they have no interest in or connection with any activity or programme of the Museum whether personal, philosophical or financial that does or that may appear to conflict with the interests or the Ethics Policy of the Museum²; and
- accept a probationary period and, where possible, a set term of duration subject to notice of intention to stop volunteering.

7 In return, volunteers may expect from the Museum:

- the equal opportunity to undertake meaningful and enjoyable assignments of real value to the Museum and its visitors within clear and appropriate programmes of activities;
- appropriate and safe working conditions with the right supervision, training and tools for the tasks assigned;
- tasks that match the needs of the Museum with the skills, knowledge, experience, age and interests of the volunteers;
- personal development through training and guidance and greater knowledge, skills and contact networks;
- reimbursement of authorised expenses incurred in carrying out assigned tasks for the Museum;
- one to one meetings with their task managers to discuss/review their assignments after an agreed probationary period (and periodically thereafter);

² Volunteers will be requested to sign an appropriate undertaking before commencing voluntary activities.

- involvement and participation in the work of the Museum and recognition for assignments undertaken;
- 8 The Museum will indemnify volunteers and hold them free from liability for civil liability to any person as the result of personal injury loss or damage arising from the execution or purported execution of tasks assigned to them on any Museum premises. This indemnity will not apply where a volunteer acts recklessly or in bad faith.
9. This Policy shall be reviewed not less than once every five years.

Adopted by the Director on 15 February 2007

Neil MacGregor