
Policy on Volunteering

This policy was approved by the Trustees on 21 January 2021 and will be reviewed no later than 2026.

1. Policy principles

- 1.1 The British Museum has a collection preserved and held for the benefit of all the world, present and future, free of charge and is a centre of research and inquiry at all levels.
- 1.2 Volunteers are very important to the Museum and their commitment and enthusiasm is appreciated across the Museum's departments and by its visitors. The Museum is committed to providing meaningful, enjoyable and safe volunteer assignments of real value within clear and appropriate programmes of activities.
- 1.3 The Museum defines volunteers as those who are under no obligation to perform duties and who have no expectation of, and do not receive any, remuneration for the time that they spend volunteering for the Museum.
- 1.4 The relationship between volunteers and the Museum does not create a legally binding contract or a relationship of employment between the Museum and the volunteer. The Museum accepts the volunteers on the understanding that their services are received at its sole discretion, and that a volunteer's relationship with the Museum may be terminated by either side at any time without notice and for whatever reason.
- 1.5 Volunteers are not a substitute for employees and the Museum does not recruit volunteers to displace them. Individuals who gain employment at the Museum must step down from their volunteer roles. Staff may not be British Museum volunteers whilst also working for the Museum, although they may occasionally assist in other roles as part of their personal development.

2. Joining the volunteer programme

- 2.1 The British Museum is committed to engaging and developing a diverse volunteer body.¹
- 2.2 When the Museum has opportunities for volunteers, where possible these are shown on the Museum website. The Museum may select individuals from applications for voluntary opportunities and invite them to a meeting to determine whether the individual would be suitable as a volunteer for the Museum. The Museum's decision on suitability of a prospective volunteer is absolute and final.

¹ British Museum Diversity and Equality Policy 2020

- 2.3 All individuals will be required to undergo security clearance and reference checks before they are formally accepted as British Museum volunteers. The level of clearance required will vary depending on the volunteer role.
- 2.4 Individuals from outside of the UK must ensure that they have a visa or equivalent documentation which permits them to volunteer in the UK for the Museum before applying to be a volunteer.
- 2.5 Children and young people (under 18) may volunteer only as part of a recognised programme or as part of a specific project developed for them by the Museum.

3. Induction and training

- 3.1 Volunteers are provided with an induction and training appropriate to their volunteer role, either by the Volunteers office or the department supervising the role. This will always include a summary of the role and the likely period of role, details of any space or equipment provision and relevant health and safety information.

4. Expenses

- 4.1 The Museum is not able to pay expenses to volunteers.

5. Supervision and support

- 5.1 The Museum is committed to ensuring that all volunteering experiences are meaningful, enjoyable, rewarding and safe. All volunteers are assigned a member of Museum staff to act as their supervisor during their time spent volunteering for the Museum and can contact the Volunteers office with any queries or concerns.
- 5.2 Volunteers do not have the authority to represent themselves as spokespersons for the Museum, to make contracts for the Museum or make any other commitment on its behalf.

6. Diversity and equality

- 6.1 The British Museum is committed to developing a diverse volunteer body and to making volunteering opportunities as accessible and responsive as possible to the different needs of our volunteers and audiences.
- 6.2 The Volunteers office will discuss any needs that prospective or existing volunteers may have in order to identify the best volunteering opportunities available and to support their full and safe involvement. When required, the Museum will make reasonable adjustments to volunteering roles where possible.

7. Health and safety and indemnity

- 7.1 The Museum is committed to ensuring that all volunteering experiences are safe. Volunteers are asked to attend any support, training or supervision sessions necessary in order to meet health and safety requirements.
- 7.2 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 negligently, recklessly or in bad faith.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Volunteers should uphold the name of the British Museum and maintain the confidentiality of all confidential information to which they are exposed while volunteering.

9. Data Protection

- 9.1 The Museum will process volunteers' personal data in accordance with the Museum's Privacy Policy and any additional privacy information which may be given, from time to time, by the Museum/Volunteers office to the volunteer in accordance with any UK data protection legislation then in force. The Museum/Volunteers office will use their best efforts to ensure that at all times the volunteers understand: (i) who is collecting / controlling their data; (ii) the purpose and scope of the data collected; (iii) steps which the Museum takes to ensure the security of the data; and (iv) who to contact if a volunteer has any questions related to their data.
- 9.2 Volunteers shall also comply with the Museum's Privacy Policy in respect of any data which they collect, process or handle during the course of their volunteering. The Volunteers office will be responsible for ensuring (with the assistance of Legal Services) that if any Volunteers are required to collect, process or handle personal data, all necessary steps have been taken to ensure compliance with any UK data legislation then in force before any such processing is carried out by the volunteer.