

## Volunteer Role Description: *Ad hoc* Activity and Event Helpers



**Help our visitors have the best possible experience!**

### About '*Ad hoc* Activity and Event' Volunteering

Are you available to volunteer over the summer period?

Do you enjoy volunteering with under 5s? (Particularly Tue, Wed, Fri or Sat)

Would you be excited to volunteer on Ad Hoc events at Harcourt Arboretum?

This role is about helping with one-off opportunities that happen across the Gardens, Libraries, and Museums (GLAM) throughout the year. In this recruitment, we are particularly looking for people who answered yes to one or more of the questions above, although we're happy to hear from anyone.

The vast majority of opportunities involve supporting **daytime events** (weekdays and/or weekends) aimed at **families, under-5s, or older people**, and occasionally the general public or school groups. Volunteers provide a warm welcome and help sessions run smoothly. Depending on the audience, this may include facilitating crafts, trails, games, object handling, sensory activities, or planting, keeping resources stocked and tidied, answering basic questions, gathering feedback, and serving tea and biscuits. Events may be pre-booked or drop-in and vary in terms of busyness.

We also have occasional opportunities for volunteers to help with **visitor surveys**. These opportunities require a certain degree of confidence, as volunteers are often positioned by themselves and need to be comfortable approaching people. Training on how to use tablets to complete the surveys is provided.

Finally, there are very occasional requests for volunteers to help with other opportunities, including:

- Late night events (usually Friday evenings)  
Volunteers help with activities similar to those at other events. The target audience is typically young people, students, and adults, although families may also attend. Most events are drop-in and often very busy.
- Lectures and private views (usually weekday evenings)

Volunteers help steward different areas: welcoming guests, pointing them in the right direction, and assisting in the cloakroom. Volunteers are often asked to wear 'smart' attire, e.g., all black.

- Admin tasks (usually weekday daytime)

Volunteers sometimes help 'behind the scenes', often ahead of a big event, e.g., with envelope stuffing, poster delivery, and materials prep, or with audience-focussed tasks, e.g., transcribing feedback and simple data entry. Many of these opportunities involve working methodically, with good attention to detail.

Activity and Event volunteers usually help in small groups, but numbers per opportunity range from 1 to 10+. Volunteers may be positioned by themselves or in pairs, but will be part of a wider team, including staff, who will offer support and/or supervision.

### **Why we use volunteers**

Volunteers tell us that they appreciate the *ad hoc* nature of this role, as it allows them to help on an occasional basis, in a variety of ways and places. It also means there's capacity for lots of different people to get involved.

Visitors tell us that they both benefit from and value their interactions with volunteers, whose warmth and enthusiasm can really enhance their experience. Volunteers are also a great practical help to staff in a 'many hands make light work' sort of way! They enable staff to offer a much wider range of activities and engage with many more people. They also help to get behind-the-scenes admin tasks done much quicker.

### **Where opportunities happen**

Most opportunities happen at the Ashmolean, Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum (outdoors, a short drive or bus journey from Oxford city centre), History of Science Museum, Museum of Natural History, Pitt Rivers Museum, and Weston Library.

Some opportunities take place at community events and venues across Oxford and Oxfordshire, in which case transportation might be offered.

### **How opportunities are advertised**

Every month, we (the Volunteer Service) email a list of upcoming opportunities, which volunteers can offer to help with via their [MyImpactPage](#) account or app, or by reply. These monthly emails are then followed by weekly-ish updates until all of the opportunities are filled. We also occasionally receive and send out last-minute requests.

### **Timing and Commitment**

There is no minimum commitment, nor the expectation of a regular commitment - although we hope that everyone will find something they are available and interested to join at least every now and then.

We do turn down offers of help when an opportunity is oversubscribed. Otherwise, slots are shared out to give as many people as possible the chance to get involved.

Events typically last 2 - 4 hours, plus 30 - 45 minutes' briefing, and staff are always grateful for extra help tidying up afterwards. At events that last all day, volunteers can choose to

help all day or for a shorter slot. Staff will typically explain the activities at a briefing on the day/evening, but they may also ask to meet in advance.

Other opportunities, e.g. visitor surveys and admin tasks, are often shorter.

### **About 'Activity and Event Helpers'**

- We're looking for volunteers who enjoy meeting all sorts of people, appreciate the value of great customer service, and want to help us provide it.
- We also want volunteers and staff to have a great experience! While some opportunities involve getting on with tasks relatively independently, most involve teamwork. Either way, we want everyone to feel positive about volunteering, including feeling supported and respected.
- Enthusiasm for the collections is more important than expertise, but even more important is a good knowledge of what's where and how to find it.
- Volunteers may occasionally have access to personal contact details as part of a task, in which case they must take the responsibility to keep this data confidential.
- Many opportunities involve standing, being in a busy environment, and/or supporting activities that require a good level of manual dexterity. Please advise us if you have any concerns about this, and we will do our best to support you.
- Also, you won't mind receiving frequent emails from us – including some last-minute ones!

### **Why you might enjoy this role**

The opportunity to:

- join a friendly, enthusiastic, and supportive team of volunteers
- use your great customer service skills to enhance people's visits
- get involved as and when you are free and interested
- meet people of all ages and backgrounds
- gain an insight in to the work of the public engagement and events teams
- improve your awareness of the collections and buildings
- build your confidence and experience

### **Other practical points**

- Volunteers can claim travel expenses of up to £5 per *ad hoc* volunteering session from the Volunteer Service.
- Young Volunteers (16- and 17-year-olds) can help at family friendly events, where there should always be sufficient levels of supervision. Whether or not they can help with other opportunities will depend on staffing. We will make it clear in our emails if an opportunity is *not* open to young volunteers.
- Some Activity and Event volunteering happens outside. We will always send you a reminder when this is the case, as volunteers need to make sure they come dressed for the weather!
- Volunteers new to onsite GLAM volunteering will need to be registered on the Volunteer Service mailing list (MyImpactPage.com), and the Volunteer Service will

need to have received two references and done an ID check before volunteers can start in this role. We will also need parent/guardian consent for young volunteers, The role does not require any additional checks.

### **Next steps...**

New volunteers will need to attend an induction. We currently have three **online** inductions scheduled to choose from, on **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June, 6-7pm, Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2-3pm** and **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June, 10-11am**. These inductions are an opportunity to explain more about the role, for you to ask any questions and for both sides to see if this is a good fit.

If you can't attend any of these, please still let us know you're interested and we will try to arrange another mutually-convenient time as soon as possible.

To let us know you're interested, please follow this link to fill in a Microsoft Form: [Interested in helping at Ad Hoc Events? Spring 2026 – Fill in form](#)

The form will ask you to:

- briefly explain what appeals to you about the role
- briefly explain a time you received a good welcome
- let us know when you can attend induction

**Deadline** – please complete the form by **14<sup>th</sup> June**, and we will aim to follow up on the 15th. Data will be kept in accordance with our Data Retention Policy.