

Volunteer Role Description: 'Science Saturday' Explainers

About 'Science Saturday'

'Science Saturday' happens next to the *T. rex* in the [Museum of Natural History](#) 2 - 4 pm, every Saturday during [Oxford University term time](#). The aim is to introduce families to some of the ideas, concepts, and processes that scientists use when they work with natural history specimens.

The four main activities each represent a different Museum collection – Entomology, Geology, Mineralogy, and Zoology – and encourage visitors to examine, measure, and speculate about specimens in different ways, using different equipment (e.g., magnifiers, scales). Each activity typically takes 10 - 15 minutes to complete, with one family completing an activity at a time. Sessions are free, drop-in, and aimed at families with children aged 8+.



We ask volunteers to arrive at 1.30 pm to help set up, and to allow extra time at the end of the session to pack away. They then work in a small team of 4 - 5 people, with one volunteer facilitating each activity and one volunteer acting as a meeter-greeter. In addition to welcoming families and explaining how the session works, the meeter-greeter also supervises a table of microscopes and slides, which children can use while they wait to join one of the main activities.

The team is coordinated by Carly Smith-Huggins, the Families Education Officer, but is supported by front-of-house Visitor Experience staff on the day.

Commitment

Because it takes time to learn and feel confident delivering all of the activities, and because Science Saturday works best with a full team of 5 volunteers, we hope that volunteers will be able to help throughout the academic year (October - June). During that time, they can expect to deliver an average of two sessions per term – although this is flexible, and there are occasionally extra opportunities to get involved. We know that plans sometimes change, but Carly will ask volunteers for their availability and will aim to confirm the rota a week or two before the start of each term.

Training

Volunteers need to attend a training session, **9.30 am - 12.30 pm on Saturday 10th October**. The training session includes information about the activities, as well as techniques for

engaging visitors with them. Volunteers become active Explainers by mutual agreement with staff following this training, although they will ideally shadow a session before getting fully involved. The team then works relatively independently to set up and run the session on the day.

About 'Science Saturday' Explainers

This role is about using a variety of questions, techniques, and basic scientific equipment to facilitate fun and accessible interactions. We are looking for volunteers with a passion for science, who will enjoy supporting all sorts of family visitors to learn more and build upon the knowledge and skills they already have.

- We hope that all volunteers will enjoy learning something new and sharing their knowledge with others. Enthusiasm is more important than expertise, as we will provide volunteers with all of the information they need. However, prior knowledge of earth and/or biological sciences is welcome and may be useful.
- Although Science Saturday is aimed at children aged 8+ (and their grown-ups!), some children may be younger and/or more or less easily-engaged. Volunteers will need to adapt their language and approach accordingly.
- This is a popular activity and volunteers will need to work together to manage groups, especially when the Museum is busy. This will help ensure that everyone has the best possible experience.
- Although accidents happen, volunteers should model and explain good object handling practice to reduce the risk of damage.



Why volunteers might enjoy this role

It's an opportunity to:

- connect with the Museum
- join a friendly, well-established, supportive team of volunteers
- excite our young visitors about science
- share and build your knowledge of the Museum and its collections
- develop and practise (science) communication skills

- gain experience of learning through objects
- potentially contribute to the Museum's social media – if you would like to share something about your volunteering

Other information

- The four activities are delivered seated, but the meeter-greeter role is usually done standing. Level access is via a lift located nearby.
- The Museum can get noisy at busy times, and the temperature and light fluctuate with the weather and season.
- This role is open to volunteers aged 16+.
- Volunteers can claim reimbursement of travel expenses up to £5 per volunteering session.
- Volunteers new to onsite GLAM volunteering will need to be registered on the GLAM 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. The role does not currently require any additional checks.

Next steps...

Depending on the level of interest, we hope to invite as many people as possible to an informal 'audition' at the Museum of Natural History on **Saturday 26th September**. This will be a chance for us to explain more about the role and for potential volunteers to ask questions and get a better sense of what the role involves. We will also set potential volunteers a task to do together. Each slot should last about half an hour.

If you are interested in getting involved, then please **complete a form by following [this link](#)**. It will ask you to:

- confirm which time(s) you could attend an audition on **Saturday 26th September** – exact timings to be confirmed, but they will be within the hours of 11 am - 12 noon, 12.45 - 1.45 pm, and 2.30 - 3.30 pm
- confirm your availability to attend training on **Saturday 10th October**
- briefly explain (max 150ish words each):
 - why you would like to be involved, *and*
 - a specific time, event, or place that made you feel excited about natural history, and why

If sending a video or voice recording would make it easier for you to apply, then you are welcome to email one to Caroline at volunteering@glam.ox.ac.uk – just make sure you include all of these points!

The deadline to apply is **Thursday 17th September**. Caroline will share expressions of interest with Carly on the 18th, and one of us will be in touch by Tuesday 22nd.

Information will be kept in accordance with our [Data Retention Schedule](#).