

Considering...working in Arts & Heritage

Introduction:

There's a huge variety of roles within this sector, from handling and conserving objects to managing multi-million pound budgets. Employers are also very varied and include museums, galleries, charities, national bodies, private consultancy firms, arts organisations, conservation organisations, heritage tourism.

Is this the right sector for me?

Are you passionate about the past? Do you value art and culture? Many people who work in this sector feel it's a privilege to do so and see themselves as custodians of our collective heritage. This kind of motivation is important, but think about whether this passion is something you want to build a career on or if you would like to pursue it as a personal interest whilst working in a different sector.

As there are so many different roles in the sector, it's important to think about what skills you have and identify which activities appeal to you most. For example, do you want a job working with the public, involving lots of variety or would you prefer to work mainly with other heritage professionals building up specialist knowledge in one particular field? Do you prefer "hands-on", practical work or theoretical research? Do you like lots of responsibility and advising others or do you prefer to carry out a project working to a set brief?

Researching the sector:

A useful starting point for an understanding of the sector and job roles is www.creative-choices.co.uk, which is aimed at people wanting to develop a career in this area, great for sector news, jobs information and useful links. Twitter is a great way to keep up to date with news stories affecting the sector, job and work experience opportunities and generally develop your commercial awareness. See [@MuseumsAssoc](https://twitter.com/MuseumsAssoc) and [@ArtsPro](https://twitter.com/ArtsPro)

Roles in the sector include:

- **Conservation Officer:** Advises on the management and conservation of historic places
- **Curator:** Responsible for specific objects/collections
- **Field Archaeologist:** Studies, records and interprets archaeological remains
- **Heritage Consultant/Manager:** Develops and runs projects to help historical places generate more income/reach a wider audience
- **Museum/Gallery Education Officer:** Helps children and other members of the public engage with Art/Heritage
- **Museum/Gallery Manager:** Responsible for recruiting and managing staff. Researching, cataloguing and communicating information to the public. Financial Management and running the organisation
- **Volunteer Co-ordinator:** Recruits and manages volunteers for specific projects or to help run aspects of the organisation
- **University lecturer:** Undertakes original research in a specific field. Teaches undergraduate and postgraduate students. Writes books and other publications to further society's knowledge and

understanding of a specialist area. May involve collaborations with external heritage organisations, e.g. national or regional museums.

Routes into the sector:

Routes can vary depending on the role, but generally most people do a significant amount of volunteering to gain relevant experience and to build up technical skills where appropriate (such as object handling, use of tools, cataloguing, explaining, lesson planning...).

- Some graduates enter the industry by starting in an administrative or entry-level position (e.g. Front of House or Visitor Guide) and working their way up as they gain experience. These types of vacancies tend to be advertised on an ad hoc basis on the company website.
- Some organisations, eg the National Trust offer graduate training schemes or graduate internships - see our information sheet on our website on *Work Experience in the Arts & Heritage Sector*
- For many roles, a postgraduate qualification like an MA in Museum Studies, conservation qualifications or teaching qualifications can be required or may give you an advantage. See our website for advice about applying and funding (www.york.ac.uk/careers/study). To search for relevant courses see: www.museumsassociation.org/qualifications and www.prospects.ac.uk/search_courses.htm, and see also the Museums Association's guide to postgraduate courses <https://www.museumsassociation.org/workforce/courses-guide-2018>

Work experience:

- See our information sheet on *Work Experience in the Arts & Heritage Sector* (www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets) for details of a range of organisations and activities to help you build up relevant experience, both during university and beyond
- We have a range of York graduates working in the sector- see our **York Profiles & Mentors** to gain further insights into what it's like working in Arts & Heritage www.york.ac.uk/careers/profiles
- Attend relevant careers events as these can be great networking opportunities. Watch out for our big "Careers In" events held in Spring and Summer terms, these often feature Arts & Heritage, Creative or Public Sector industries. In many departments we also run smaller alumni events, where you can meet graduates working in different career areas e.g. curators, heritage management, marketing, museum visitor services. For more details on these and other events visit www.york.ac.uk/careers/events

Note: some internships offered in this sector may be unpaid. Before starting an internship you should be clear about the length of the internship, pay and conditions, what you will be expected to do, and what you will gain from the experience. See our know your rights page for more advice: www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers/look-for-work/issues/

Useful resources in Careers and Placements:

- www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway for details of job opportunities in this sector

Reference books and journals in Careers and Placements

- Museums and Galleries Yearbook
- Careers in Art History
- Museums Services Directory 2018
- How to get a job in a museum or art gallery
- Future Proof Museums
- Museums Journal
- British Archaeology journal
- Focus, Informing the conservation of the built environment 2016 (journal)
- The Archaeological Forum Journal 2013
- National Trust Handbook 2016
- Historic House 2016 and 2017 journal

Careers websites

- **Museums Association** is the professional organisation for heritage workers. Offers training and conferences, good job search facility and careers information www.museumsassociation.org/careers/starting-your-career
- www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal Museums Journal for the latest news in the sector
- www.artsprofessional.co.uk/ Arts Professional, great for news and info relating to the Arts sector
- <https://forarthistory.org.uk/news/insight/> Association for Art History has a useful Insight section, with case studies of different jobs as well as news and features relating to art history
- <https://museumcrush.org/> is a useful guide to museums, galleries and heritage sites, covering daily news stories, highlighting key exhibitions etc.
- www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/browse-sector/information-research-and-analysis for job descriptions, salary info and entry requirements for a range of heritage roles
- www.museumjobs.com for jobs in the sector
- www.aim-museums.co.uk The Association of Independent Museums
- <http://ccskills.org.uk/careers>, sector skills council for creative and cultural careers relevant news, careers info and job adverts
- www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/JobDesk Job desk site for museum jobs

Please note: The websites listed here are not intended to represent a comprehensive list. Careers and Placements cannot be held responsible for the content of external websites.

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