JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Assistant Curator (Assistant Curator Development Programme)
Division:	Collections
Departments:	Asian Department (including the Islamic Middle East); Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department. As part of the five year contract secondments will be arranged in other curatorial departments: Museum of Childhood; Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass; Word & Image.
Pay Band:	6
Contract:	5 year fixed term contract for training

Background

The V&A is Britain's national museum of art and design, and is one of the greatest museums of decorative arts in the world. The national collections of watercolours, furniture and woodwork, miniatures, sculpture, silver, jewellery and metalwork, textiles and dress are all held at the V&A. The V&A is also home to the National Art Library.

The V&A's purpose is to enable everyone to enjoy its collections and explore the cultures that created them; and to inspire those who shape contemporary design.

We are currently recruiting for two of the Museum's Curatorial departments. Candidates are encouraged to learn about these departments from the V&A website, www.vam.ac.uk:

- Asian Department. This is divided into 3 sections: South and South-East Asian; East Asian; Middle Eastern;
- Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department

As part of the five year contract secondments will also be arranged in other curatorial departments

- Museum of Childhood
- Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass Department
- Word & Image Department. This is divided into 5 sections: Art Library Collections; Designs; Paintings; Photographs; Prints

The Assistant Curator Development Programme (ACDP) has been designed to enable junior curators to acquire the skills, knowledge and experience required to care for collections both within the V&A and beyond. The programme blends a broad mix of on-the-job training, formal training and self-directed study.

Purpose of job

As a member of a curatorial team an Assistant Curator on the ACDP provides curatorial support to the Museum's Collections Departments and to Museum projects, and liaises with the Collections Services teams (Conservation; Technical Services; Photography Services; and Documentation and Collections Management Services). Assistant Curators spend their time working on object-related activity and maintaining documentation which is relevant and integral to the Museum's collections management policy. All posts deal with enquiries from the public - written, by telephone and in person – and Assistant Curators should have a strong commitment to public access.

The range of tasks undertaken by Assistant Curators varies considerably at different points of time but it is the Museum's intention that Assistant Curators who are participating on the ACDP should gain as wide an experience of curatorial work as possible.

Main tasks can include

1. Assisting with all aspects of the care of objects, including inspection, marking and location moves. This will involve liaising and working with technical staff, and requires lifting, carrying and installation of objects.

2. Preparing and maintaining documentation (both paper based records and computerised systems), contributing to online resources.

3. Checking galleries and stores, and organising relevant maintenance.

4. Maintaining photography programmes. This will involve liaising with photographers and moving objects.

5. Responding to public enquiries; providing access to material in reference collections and student rooms; supervising visitors.

6. Assisting with the administration, co-ordination and documentation of long- and short-term loans, from and into the Museum.

7. Acting as a courier for the loan of objects in the UK and overseas.

8. Assisting with the preparation of publications both in print media and online. Assisting with collection interpretation, e.g. enhancing online catalogue records, gallery talks etc.

9. Assisting with new displays.

10. Be committed to health and safety and ensure familiarity with all of the Museum's health and safety policies and procedures.

11. Be security conscious, ensure familiarity and co-operation with all museum security procedures and ensure you wear a security pass at all times when on museum premises.

12. Promote equality and diversity in all aspects of your work by developing and maintaining positive working relationships, ensuring that colleagues are treated fairly and with respect/dignity and actively contributing to developments that support the museum's strategy for widening access, inclusion and diversity.

13. Carry out ad hoc duties as requested by appropriate managers within your department.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential requirements

1. Education up to at least degree level, preferably in an area relevant to the job.

2. Excellent grammatical English and good oral and written communication skills.

3. Commitment, enthusiasm and responsiveness to opening up the collections to a broad audience, including non-traditional users.

4. Proven ability to undertake, complete and communicate research.

5. Good working knowledge of a relevant second modern language.

6. Highly computer literate with an ability to manage information systematically and accurately.

7. Willingness to work flexibly as part of a team in order to achieve collective targets and deadlines.

8. High level of manual dexterity and demonstrable ability to acquire and apply essential core technical skills such as lifting, carrying and installing objects.

9. Good time management skills. An ability to set priorities, manage a number of tasks concurrently and function with limited supervision.

10. Practical experience of work or volunteering within a museum or other relevant cultural organisation.

11. Entitlement to work in the UK for the 5-year period of the contract.

Desirable requirements

1. Knowledge of collections management.

2. In addition, where candidates are asked to express a preference for a particular curatorial department for their initial placement, the following desirable attributes would be advantageous:

Asian	A demonstrable interest in the art, design and culture of Asia, including the Islamic Middle East.
Furniture Textiles and Fashion	A demonstrable interest in some aspect of the history of furniture or textiles and their use in interiors.

3. At least one position will be in the Asian Department. Relevant language skills will be advantageous for this.

4. As part of the five year contract secondments will be arranged in other curatorial departments, which may include the Museum of Childhood; Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass; Word & Image.

5. The Museum is particularly keen to receive applications from candidates with strong interests in 20th and 21st century art and design.

Training and Development

In order to increase personal skills and provide flexibility, Assistant Curators will be based in one of the Collections Departments for the five years of the programme, but will be required to spend up to twelve months on secondments in other departments both within the Collections and Collections Services Divisions, or elsewhere in the Museum at management's discretion.

The development programme aims to enhance Assistant Curators' career opportunities within and beyond the V&A. It involves a mix of on-the-job training, formal training sessions and self-directed study. Breadth of experience is assured through secondments to departments or projects other than your 'home' department.

The programme is designed in modular format, and requires participants to undertake at least 30 hours formal training per year in addition to study in their own time and on the job. A number of curatorial, care of collections and general modules are organised every year to support Assistant Curators' development. These are subject to change based on the needs of the role, museum policy and practice and work undertaken in departments. Assistant Curators are expected to take responsibility for their own career and professional development and discuss these with their line managers.

In the first two years Assistant Curators build a strong foundation by developing core museum skills for responding to the demands of their roles and work undertaken in departments following Museum policy and guidelines. At the start of the programme, an induction programme is organised and run by the Training and Development Section and departments to cover museum orientation, basic tasks and liaison with departments. Further formal training covers collections documentation, management of information, care of collections whether on display, in storage or on loan, making use of resources, gallery presentations, collections interpretation and museum education.

During the last 3 years of the programme, participants focus on developing further their collections management skills and expertise through work based learning. Assistant Curators are responsible for their own continuous professional development and are required to participate in the training that is offered as part of the programme. Training includes a number of research and museology seminars and core management modules. Coaching and mentoring is offered locally in the departments and more formally via the Training and Development Section if requested. Participants will also have the opportunity to undertake the V&A Curatorial Qualification and some external training as agreed by their line manager.

Progress Reviews

Throughout the programme there will be periodic reviews with the relevant managers to discuss progress and any additional development needs. The ACDP Management and the Training and Development Section will offer advice and support to Assistant Curators and their line managers in order to ensure the programme's aims are met.

OTHER INFORMATION

Hours/Salary

Net working hours (i.e. excluding meal breaks) are 36 per week.

The salary will be within V&A pay band 6 (£20,372 rising to £23,757 per annum). Future pay progression will be in accordance with the V&A's Pay Agreement(s). Normal level transfer and promotion rules will apply for internal candidates.

Annual Leave

28 days plus 8 days public holidays

Pension benefits

The Civil Service offers a choice of either an occupational pension or stakeholder pension, giving you the flexibility to choose a scheme that suits you best. The occupational pension scheme currently has a 3.5% - 5.9% member contribution rate dependent on annual pensionable earnings, with an employer contribution rate of between 16.7% - 24.3%.

The 'Partnership' pension account is a stakeholder money purchase pension with an employer contribution based on age. Further details are available upon request or appointment.

Other benefits

Free entrance to all the major museums in London as well as many others.

An interest free season ticket or bicycle loan is available after three months.

Subject to the society's terms and conditions, V&A staff are entitled to membership of the Benenden Healthcare Society. Further information is available from HR or via their web-site on www.benenden-healthcare.org.uk

To apply

To apply online, please go to the V&A's website at www.vam.ac.uk/jobs

If you have any queries regarding the recruitment process, you can email us – hr@vam.ac.uk or telephone us on 020 7942 2937.

Closing date for receipt of applications is midnight Monday 26th 2013.

Interviews will be held on week commencing 23rd September 2013.

Interview expenses will not be paid unless there is a prior agreement.