

The University of Manchester

Job Description

Job title:	Collections Assistant
Reports to:	Collections Coordinator
Organisation unit:	University of Manchester Library: Curatorial Practices
Date:	January 2021
HERA:	MAPPS-UML-CP-DC-D (311, Grade 4)

Overall purpose of the job:

- To assist in the day-to-day management and development of Special Collections materials, supporting curators in acquiring, documenting, managing and making accessible rare books, maps, archives, manuscripts and visual materials
- To support Special Collections academic engagement activities, including teaching and learning, reader engagement, and public engagement with research

Key responsibilities:

- To contribute to an environment that values and celebrates the diverse nature of the University of Manchester's population and to take positive steps to achieve equality in the workplace and to both meet and exceed our obligations under equality legislation
- To assist in the management and development of Special Collections (SC) materials and to support activities relating to the management of the collections
- To use, and to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of, relevant software and systems, e.g. Alma (the library management system), Library Search, EMu, Elgar, Preservica, Luna, Manchester Digital Collections, and to assist in training staff, JRRI fellows and readers in their use
- To assist in the accessioning, cataloguing and indexing of SC materials, e.g. creating electronic accession records, surveys, basic catalogue records for EMu and other relevant systems
- To assist with collection management, e.g. sorting and re-boxing, labelling, passive conservation, producing location guides and shelf labels
- To help determine or amend the location of SC materials (in liaison with Collection Strategies), and to amend location databases and other records accordingly
- To work with the Collection Care team to ensure the collections are preserved and conserved to the highest possible standards
- To help ensure the security of the collections
- To deal with enquires relating to SC materials referred from the Reader Engagement team, within the context of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act (1988), the Data Protection Act (2018), the Freedom of Information Act (2000), and other legislation, passing on specialised enquiries when appropriate

- To help Reader Engagement staff support readers using SC materials in the Reading Rooms, e.g. in retrieving, issuing and listing the material and providing training in handling and supporting the delivery of the service as required
- To assist in the promotion of SC materials, particularly through the creation and maintenance of Library web page content, blogs, social media, etc.
- To assist SC academic engagement activities e.g. support at training, seminars and workshops, developing learning materials and booking sessions/events
- To assist curators and others in planning and delivering activities that support public engagement with research, including assisting in curating exhibitions
- To support the Imaging team, e.g. through the identification and retrieval of materials for digitisation
- To assist in the development and delivery of John Rylands Research Institute services and activities, e.g. support for visiting fellows and at JRRRI events
- To assist the Collections Coordinator and others in the collection, recording and reporting of statistics and other management information in relation to the activities undertaken by Curatorial Practices
- To provide administrative support to Curatorial Practices staff, e.g. typing up hand-written lists, booking rooms, circulating agendas, taking minutes at meetings
- To help supervise staff, volunteers and interns assigned to Curatorial Practices
- To meet agreed personal and departmental performance targets and to collect and collate both quantitative and qualitative information
- To participate in a rota to cover evenings and weekends
- To take an active approach to continuing professional development
- To be responsible for compliance with and the embedding of University policies, procedures and requirements - in particular those relating to health and safety; equality, diversity and inclusion; and information governance
- Such other duties as may reasonably be associated with the grade and a role of this nature
- To work at any Library site as required
- To be flexible in relation to hours of work as may be reasonably requested from time to time
- To wear supplied Library branded clothing during defined promotional activities and special events
- To understand the specific context within which the role operates and how it relates to the wider University goals and business processes, in order to facilitate informed decision making
- To ensure the working environment reflects the University's and Library's values

Person Specification:

Essential knowledge, skills and experience:

- Educated to A level standard (or equivalent qualification) or appropriate equivalent experience
- Appropriate experience of working in a library, archive or equivalent organization
- Awareness of the particular requirements of maintaining and managing special collections, including conservation and security
- Understanding of the value of Special Collections for research, teaching and learning
- Experience of using a library, archive or museum management system
- Excellent IT skills, including experience of using office software such as MS-Word, Excel, internet and email

- Excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills
- The ability to work individually and as part of a team, and to work well under pressure
- Ability to adapt to change successfully
- Ability to perform the physical tasks associated with the role
- Attention to detail
- Ability to work under pressure and to prioritise departmental needs
- Ability to use initiative as necessary and work without constant supervision

Desirable skills, knowledge and experience:

- Previous experience of handling rare books, maps, manuscripts, archives and/or visual materials
- Knowledge of documentation principles and practices relevant to Special Collections
- Knowledge of collection care issues