

The University of Manchester

Job Description

Job title:	Special Collections Curator
Reports to:	<i>Either</i> Head of Digital Special Collections + Services <i>or</i> Collections + Discovery Manager <i>or</i> Research + Learning Manager
Organisation unit:	University of Manchester Library: Curatorial Practices
Date:	January 2021
HERA:	MAPPS-UML-CP-R&L-D (435, Grade 6)

Overall purpose of the job:

- To apply current professional knowledge and expertise to the curation of agreed Special Collections materials to exemplary standards
- To take an audience-focussed approach to increasing innovative research and discovery, teaching and learning, and public engagement with the Special Collections
- To use knowledge and understanding of research and discovery, and teaching and learning in agreed disciplines to identify the potential of the Special Collections materials to meet current and future needs
- To make an active contribution to the activities and development of the John Rylands Research Institute

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 curate agreed Special Collections materials (including digital) to exemplary standards, contributing to the development, management, care and security of the collections in line with Library policies and procedures
- To take an audience-focussed approach to improving access to the collections, through cataloguing, digitisation, specialist enquiries and the reader service, liaising as appropriate with Library colleagues and academic staff
- To manage individuals and groups as required. Allocate tasks, set priorities and performance targets, monitor progress against agreed standards and performance criteria, and provide effective feedback. Proactively ensuring effective working relationships within the team and with those with whom the team interacts
- To use initiative to identify and act on opportunities for embedding Special Collections materials into research and discovery, teaching and learning, and public engagement activities, liaising as appropriate with Library colleagues and academic staff
- To offer collections-based support to researchers and learners at all levels, including the promotion of digital collections
- To maintain a working knowledge of collection strengths and collecting priorities of comparable institutions, and of copyright, data protection and other legislation with a bearing on the use and management of the Special Collections

- To contribute knowledge and expertise to partnerships and projects using Special Collections materials within relevant disciplines for research, and especially to support the activities of the John Rylands Research Institute (JRRI)
- To contribute to public engagement with research in agreed disciplines, liaising as appropriate with Library colleagues and academic staff
- To identify material (across collections and formats) with the potential to contribute to taught courses within agreed disciplines, and to work with academics to develop and deliver relevant teaching programmes
- To develop and support student placements based in Curatorial Practices
- To work with the Collection Care team to ensure the collections are preserved and conserved to the highest possible standards
- To contribute to the development and delivery of public engagement programmes, including curating exhibitions and displays, and to promote Special Collections materials and activities through tours, talks, publications and social media activities
- To liaise with stakeholders, including existing and potential donors, creators and depositors, over the acquisition, development and use of Special Collections materials, in line with Library policies
- To identify Special Collections materials with the potential to engage alumni and potential donors and help to incorporate them into alumni events and fundraising activities
- To lead and contribute to the development of fundraising bids and grant applications and to take/share responsibility for managing ensuing projects
- To assist in planning and implementing changes to service or approach in line with the Library's strategic priorities and the changing academic environment
- To contribute to the development and delivery of the team's operational plan, including by managing agreed projects
- To establish and nurture highly effective relationships with Library and University colleagues, in order to achieve shared objectives
- To meet agreed personal and departmental performance targets and to collect and collate both quantitative and qualitative information
- To represent the University Library at external and internal meetings and to become involved in external professional networks and groups relating to Curatorial Practices
- 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 degree level in a subject represented in the Special Collections of the University of Manchester Library
- Full professional qualification in librarianship, archive management or museum studies, and/or relevant experience at a comparable level

- Professional experience in a relevant environment
- Commitment to and experience of the exploitation of Special Collections for research and discovery, teaching and learning, and public engagement
- Knowledge of one or more metadata standards appropriate to Special Collections
- Excellent interpersonal skills to work in a highly collegiate environment
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and ability to share knowledge and expertise, present and reach a variety of audiences
- Excellent team working skills to foster collaboration within and beyond Curatorial Practices
- Project management skills
- Excellent digital literacy including competence across office software applications and expertise with relevant functional software and systems
- Proven ability to deliver presentations to all members of the school or specific discipline area
- Proven ability to query, analyse and summarise complex data from a variety of sources
- Hold, or be prepared to apply for, Criminal Records Bureau clearance (for work with young people under 18 and vulnerable adults)

Desirable skills, knowledge and experience

- Experience of staff management and motivation
- Experience of recruitment and selection
- Experience of curating Special Collections materials
- Knowledge of current Higher Education research methodologies and pedagogies
- Experience of developing or contributing to funding bids or grant applications
- Awareness and understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the curation and preservation of digital collections
- Active membership of a relevant professional organisation or body