

The University of Manchester

Job Description

Job Title: Head of Digital Special Collections and Services

Reports to: Associate Director (Curatorial Practices)

Organisation Unit: University of Manchester Library: Curatorial Practices

Date: January 2021

Previous HERA:

Overall Purpose of the Job:

- To provide strategic leadership of the Special Collections Reader Engagement, Building Care & Operations Imaging and Visitor Services teams,
- To lead the development of policies and programmes for advanced imaging and digitisation
- To position the Curatorial Practices Directorate at the leading edge of relevant digital developments in order to facilitate outstanding research, teaching and learning, and public engagement, with a particular focus on Digital Humanities and advanced imaging
- To take a strategic role in the management, development and promotion of the outstanding Special Collections of the University of Manchester Library
- To support the Associate Director (Curatorial Practices) in leadership and strategic decision making within the Directorate, deputising for him/her as appropriate, and to be an active member of the Curatorial Practices Directorate Management Team
- To lead the development and implementation of digital preservation policies and programmes relating to Curatorial Practices
- To lead and manage SC curators and collections assistants in support of excellent research, teaching and learning, public engagement with research, and collection development and management, in collaboration with Special Collections Managers

Key Responsibilities, Accountabilities or Duties:

- To provide strategic leadership for the Special Collections Imaging, Reader Engagement, Building Care & Operations, and Visitor Services teams ensuring effective performance and continuous improvement against agreed targets
- To keep policies, procedures, KPIs and staffing within the teams under active review recommending and implementing improvements and changes as necessary
- To contribute proactively to the development and implementation of Library-wide operational planning and initiatives in support of University strategy and Library priorities
- To take an active role in the Directorate Management Team supporting the Associate Director for Curatorial Practices in developing a coordinated and cooperative approach to prioritising the work of the Directorate in line with strategy, considering service innovation and development issues and leading change To act as deputy for the Associate Director, Curatorial Practices as required
- To work closely with colleagues across the Library Exec and Leadership Teams to ensure that the full potential of digital technologies and applications is realised in order to facilitate world-class research and teaching and learning on the Library's Special Collections

- To establish, develop and nurture strategically important relationships both internally and externally to the University in order to maintain an active awareness of national and international developments relating to Special Collections, and to recommend developments as appropriate
- To develop and maintain knowledge of research, teaching and learning in disciplines at the University of Manchester, identify collections with relevance to these disciplines, and actively engage with them in collaboration with Faculty & Student Partnerships
- To contribute to an outstanding visitor experience at the John Rylands Library supporting the University's goal of Social Responsibility
- To curate agreed collections to best practice standards, working closely with Collection Strategies, and to exploit them to deliver outstanding academic and public engagement
- To identify opportunities to innovate, bid for funding and join or lead projects through a well-established network of relationships across the University and externally
- To identify opportunities for national and international collaboration and to promote and represent the Library at appropriate internal and external committees, meetings and events, and to take all opportunities to promote innovation taking place at the University of Manchester Library
- 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
- 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 share in the Library's culture and values and ensure the working environment reflects the Library's Ways of Working

Person Specification:

Essential skills, knowledge and experience:

- Professionally qualified (librarianship or archive management) and possessing a relevant degree/postgraduate qualification plus significant appropriate management and leadership experience
- or
- Extensive vocational and strategic management and leadership experience demonstrating professional development through a series of progressively more demanding and influential work roles, backed by evidence of significant development of appropriate specialist knowledge.
 - Proven leadership abilities, including abilities to identify opportunities and challenges, to initiate and drive through change, to lead, manage and motivate staff, and to address performance issues
 - Excellent knowledge and understanding of current and emerging digital humanities trends, and their application and potential in Special Collections
 - Good understanding of metadata standards and data curation practices relevant to digital humanities
 - Excellent interpersonal skills, including ability to build relationships, influence and negotiate
 - Proven written and oral communication skills and ability to present and reach a variety of audiences
 - Proven experience of project management skills
 - Proven digital literacy skills including social media, competence across office software applications and expertise with SC software and systems

- Significant experience of service planning and management, including policy and process development and a proven ability to manage change
- Strong understanding of the motivation and needs of student and researcher audiences in a research-intensive university
- Good understanding of the motivation and needs of public audiences of cultural institutions
- Proven ability to anticipate challenges and to respond to them creatively and innovatively
- Demonstrable personal and professional commitment to the University's strategic goals, themes and values

Desirable skills, knowledge and experience:

- Postgraduate degree in a subject area relevant to Special Collections at the University of Manchester
- Experience of managing rare books, manuscripts, archives and/or visual collections within a higher education environment
- Understanding of the higher education environment as it impacts on Special Collections and the University of Manchester Library
- Experience of writing funding bids and seeking philanthropic support within the higher education or cultural sectors