

# JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Vacancy reference:</b>	SRF32024
<b>Post Title:</b>	Collections Researcher
<b>Grade:</b>	Grade 5
<b>School/Department:</b>	University Museums and Special Collections Services (UMASCS)
<b>Reports to:</b>	Curator of MERL Collections
<b>Responsible for:</b>	N/A

## Purpose

This post will support a range of collections-related activities that form part of the Building Connections project funded by Arts Council England's Designation Development Fund. The project's aim is to create a researched digital pathway to better understanding of the context of groups of objects, whether as part of our gallery displays, handling material or our open access stores. Themes already under consideration include decolonisation and migration. Drawing on the MERL's Designated archive and library as well as academic, community and curatorial expertise from across the country, with further international potential, the project aims increase both research and public engagement-led interest in The MERL's collections and to act as a model for the sector.

## Main duties and responsibilities

### *Database and Terminology*

- Use the Museum's Adlib database and Enterprise searching system and other databases to research themes for digital interpretation, under supervision of the Curator and Principal Archivist.
- Undertake training to use the in-house digital exhibition tool and then prepare exhibitions and trails to enhance the gallery interpretation and online presence of The MERL
- Undertake digitisation of items where appropriate and add digital assets to The MERL's Digital Asset Management System (DAMS)
- Make approved changes to data held on the database, under supervision of the Curator or Principal Archivist.

### *Collections Management*

- Support the Curator in work connected to loans, enquiries, acquisitions, disposals and transfers concerning the object collection
- Undertake object research, as required to enhance interpretation in the galleries and online and occasionally to support accessioning and other elements of collections management
- Contribute to regular reporting regarding ongoing project activities, especially in relation to the Building Connections project
- Support activity related to the assessment of objects for use in hands-on access and public engagement, as required
- Create pop-up and other temporary displays of objects and archives for the visiting public that are linked to or illustrate the themes developed through digital means.

### *Audience Engagement*

- Support the Museum and Archive in delivering better access to collections for visiting researchers; this will involve training and may include serving as an occasional reading room

assistant or helping to accommodate visiting researchers requiring access to particular museum objects

- Work with the Curator, Learning and Engagement Manager and others to develop a process of consulting with users, community members, academics and others to identify themes for enhanced digital interpretation.
- Undertake evaluation of the digital resources produced, including gathering evidence of use and feedback on the effectiveness of the interpretation.

### **Supervision received**

You will work under the direct supervision of the Curator of MERL Collections.

### **Supervision given**

N/A.

### **Contact**

Head of Collections and Engagement; Head of Archives; Curator of Art; Museum of English Rural Life and University Special Collections staff, other University and external partners and specialists, external stakeholders including enquirers, specialist users, and visiting researchers, members of the public and the local community of Reading.

### **Terms and conditions**

Full time, fixed term for 12 months.

This document outlines the duties required for the time being of the post to indicate the level of responsibility. It is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list and the line manager may vary duties from time to time which do not change the general character of the job or the level of responsibility entailed.

**Date assessed:** 14 February 2020

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title	School/Department
Collections Researcher	UMASCS

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
<b>Skills Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent written and oral communication skills inclusive of excellent attention to detail</li> <li>• Good team working skills</li> <li>• Ability to deal effectively and professionally with enquiries</li> <li>• Proficiency in office software (esp. spreadsheets and word-processing), internet, and email</li> <li>• Good working ability with collection databases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competence with photo-editing software, scanning equipment, and/or digital cameras</li> <li>• Some proficiency in cataloguing on a collections database</li> </ul>
<b>Attainment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduate degree (second class or higher)</li> <li>• Postgraduate qualification in Museum Studies/Archive Administration, or other equivalent relevant professional experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree in a relevant subject e.g. History, Anthropology, Archaeology</li> </ul>

<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to demonstrate an interest in rural artefacts and archives</li> <li>• Able to demonstrate knowledge of collections management in practice</li> <li>• Strong familiarity with museum/archive documentation and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant subject and collections-based knowledge</li> <li>• Awareness of basic principles of conservation and collections care</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of archival and/or library-based research</li> <li>• Experience of liaising with, and engaging, a range of stakeholders and audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of accessioning and cataloguing of museum objects or archives</li> <li>• Experience of retrospective cataloguing and documentation transcription</li> <li>• Experience of developing and implementing streamlined ways of working</li> </ul>

<b>Disposition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approachable and friendly disposition</li> <li>• Calm under pressure</li> <li>• Ability to work methodically, neatly and accurately</li> <li>• Practical approach to problem-solving</li> <li>• Able to prioritise tasks and manage time effectively</li> </ul>	
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to cope with the physical demands of the work (e.g. manual handling)</li> <li>• Ability to undertake work in a variety of locations, e.g. in museum stores, office-based environments, and meetings both within and outside the University</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full valid driving licence</li> </ul>

Completed by: Isabel Hughes	Date: 03/02/2020
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