

General Guidelines for Gardens, Libraries, and Museums (GLAM) Volunteers

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at GLAM. We appreciate your support and hope you enjoy your time with us! These Guidelines have been created for everyone involved in volunteering to enable a safe, positive, and welcoming experience for all. They set out what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. Please read them carefully and sign and date at the bottom. You can also read the GLAM Volunteer Policy on our webpages: <https://glam.web.ox.ac.uk/sitefiles/glam-volunteering-policy-aug-2025.pdf>.

Volunteering at GLAM

Your Status as a Volunteer: We are grateful to our volunteers, who give their time freely, and we strive for a positive volunteer experience. Volunteers help staff to deliver activities in accordance with volunteer role descriptions, which outline the tasks and remit of those roles. When volunteers have more than one role, there will be a role description for each of them. We expect you to work safely, reliably, to the best of your ability, and to the standard required of your role. Volunteering is, on both sides, an informal relationship based on moral obligation only. There is no contract, and you can stop at any point. Equally, circumstances may arise meaning that it isn't possible for the GLAM institution(s) or individual supervisor(s) to continue with the volunteering arrangement for a particular role or volunteer.

Being Part of and Representing GLAM: When volunteering, you become a 'Face of GLAM' and will encounter members of the public, even if your role is behind the scenes. As such, you should not represent your own opinions as those of GLAM or the University, or speak or behave in a way that reflects badly on them. GLAM is committed to being an inclusive environment, in which everyone is treated with respect, courtesy, and consideration, be they staff, volunteers, or visitors, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. We will not tolerate any form of harassment. We expect volunteers to follow these principles and help us provide a positive working environment and a warm welcome to all.

References and DBS (Safeguarding) Checks

- For most onsite volunteering roles, we will ask you to provide the names of two referees. The GLAM Volunteer Service must have received two valid references prior to you starting volunteering. This will be specified in relevant role descriptions.
- Some roles that involve working with children and/or adults at risk may require volunteers to be DBS checked. This will be specified in relevant role descriptions.
- Your volunteer supervisor is the best person to ask if you require a reference. However, if they are no longer in post or if you volunteer across multiple roles or events, then please ask the GLAM Volunteer Service if we are able to help. Please ask permission before providing anyone's contact details.

Identity Checks

- All onsite volunteers must undergo an in-person identity check recorded by the GLAM Volunteer Service prior to starting.
- If you hold a UK immigration status, it is your responsibility to ensure that the volunteering you do with us does not breach the conditions of your Visa.

Insurance: Volunteers are covered by the institution's insurance. Cover will start on your first day of volunteering.

Your Data

- We use a volunteer management system 'Better Impact' to hold and process your data. Your portal to this is [MyImpactPage.com](https://www.betterimpact.com) or the 'My Impact' mobile app.
- Each year, the GLAM Volunteer Service will ask you to indicate that you wish to remain on the mailing list and continue volunteering, and to provide any updated information. Your information will only be used by GLAM staff involved in coordinating volunteering and for reporting purposes. Our privacy notice can be found at: <https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/privacy-notice-volunteer-mailing-list>
- Supervisors may sometimes ask volunteers if they are happy to share contact details within a specific team, e.g. for ease of communication. You are under no obligation to do so and will still be able to volunteer if you prefer not to.
- Volunteers attending online Microsoft Teams meetings need to be aware that their email address is visible to others in the meeting.

Young Volunteers: Because they are defined as children in the eyes of the law – and will be treated as such with regard to safeguarding – 16- & 17-year-olds are only eligible for some activities. The GLAM Volunteer Service must have received written consent from a guardian prior to a young volunteer starting. Staff will never hold 1:1 meetings – including online meetings – with young volunteers without at least one other adult being present. Volunteers should remember that others in the team may be under 18. They should check that other volunteers are aged 18+ before making contact outside of volunteering.

Supervision: You will have a named supervisor/event organiser, who will act as your point of staff contact, for each volunteering opportunity you undertake. Supervisors will provide induction and training, carry out reviews, and ensure that your volunteering hours are counted. Event organisers will provide briefing and on-the-day supervision. They may feedback to the GLAM Volunteer Service about individual volunteers. Volunteers can also feedback to the Volunteer Service about their supervisors/event organisers.

Support Needs: Some volunteers have extra support needs. Please contact the GLAM Volunteer Service to discuss any ways in which you can be better supported in your volunteering.

Induction, Briefing, and Training

- Information provided through induction, briefing, and training should help you to meet the standards we expect from volunteers.
- For public-facing roles, you will be encouraged to think about the needs of different audiences you might encounter whilst volunteering.
- The GLAM Volunteer Service Assistant inducts new volunteers into the *Ad hoc* Activity and Event role. You will then be briefed by the event organiser about each specific activity or event. For events, this will typically be 30 minutes before the start of the event. Volunteers are occasionally invited to attend a briefing a day or two before an event, but this is generally only the case if the event is complex or has an early start time. In addition to explaining what you will be doing, the event organiser will also go through relevant site- and activity-specific health and safety information as part of the briefing.

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- For all other roles (regular roles with visitors, behind-the-scenes roles, and online roles), your supervisor will ensure that you have the necessary access and training, including health and safety information, that you need. You may be offered additional training as you develop in the role.
- If your role involves creating content, then you will be asked to sign a Deed of Copyright Assignment enabling the University to freely make use of this content. Your supervisor will discuss this with you during your induction.
- Relevant, generalist training will be advertised as it arises, but attendance is optional.

Communication

- The GLAM Volunteer Service will email you as and when it needs to in order to update you with news and information. You can also email us with general queries.
- We will respond to emails as soon as we can, but this may take longer at busy times. If you have a site-specific or urgent enquiry, please contact your supervisor or the venue.
- For most roles, your supervisor will discuss their method of communicating with you.
- For the *Ad hoc* Activity and Event role, the GLAM Volunteer Service Assistant will send regular emails about opportunities and confirm assignments. Event organisers will then be in touch with any supplementary information a day or two before an activity. This will typically be by email, although they might occasionally phone if there are any last-minute issues.

Timing and Commitment: We try to be as flexible about when and how much you volunteer, as long as it is still helpful to our activities and audiences. If you have indicated that you will be available at a particular time but can no longer help, please give your supervisor/event organiser as much notice as possible. If you need to cancel last-minute and cannot get hold of your supervisor/event organiser, then please phone the venue. If you would like to change the times when you volunteer on an ongoing basis, you should discuss this with your supervisor.

Expenses: Volunteers can claim up to £5.00 of reimbursement of travel expenses for each instance of volunteering. Please keep hold of any relevant receipts or tickets for evidence. For most roles, your supervisor can provide you with an expenses claim form to complete and return to them. *Ad hoc* Activity and Event volunteers should ask the GLAM Volunteer Service for the form or for reimbursement via petty cash. If you volunteer across different roles and/or departments, you may have to make multiple claims for reimbursement.

Confidentiality: In the course of volunteering, you may have access to sensitive, personal, or confidential information about GLAM or people within it. You must not use or disclose this information either during your volunteering or at any time afterwards unless consent has been given.

Support for You: The GLAM Volunteer Service advocates for volunteers across the Gardens, Libraries, and Museums. If you encounter any problems or have any concerns, please get in touch with us. If you would like to talk to us about your volunteering, please let us know when you are available and we will arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. If a problem arises during your volunteering or you have a complaint, the first step is to have an informal conversation with your supervisor or the GLAM Volunteer Service, using the University's Volunteer Problem-solving Procedure: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/sitefiles/volunteers-problem-solving-procedure-june-2023.pdf>.

Stopping Volunteering: Every summer, the GLAM Volunteer Service emails *everyone* on the mailing list to confirm that they still want to volunteer/hear from us. We archive the profiles of people who do not respond. If you want to stop volunteering/hearing from us at any other point, please email volunteering@glam.ox.ac.uk to tell us. Your supervisor will communicate with the relevant volunteer(s) if they are stopping a volunteer role. Our data retention schedule can be found at: <https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/volunteer-retention-schedule>.

Volunteering Onsite

Entering and Leaving the Building

- To ensure that staff know who is working in the building (for evacuation purposes), please sign in/out and report to your supervisor/event organiser on arrival and when you leave.
- A volunteer badge or lanyard should be worn at all times to identify you as helping in an official capacity. It also identifies your valuable volunteer status to visitors, other volunteers, and staff.

Dress

- If the task you are doing requires safety clothing or equipment, e.g. goggles or gloves, your supervisor will provide it for you or specify in advance what to wear or bring.
- Other than that, volunteers can wear what they feel comfortable in as long as it is appropriate to the role. Please dress for the weather when helping with outdoor activities, e.g. at the Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum.

Your Belongings: Depending upon the venue and role, these can remain with you or be kept in a locker or locked office.

Visitor Belongings: The Ashmolean is the only venue with public lockers. Elsewhere, please refer enquiries to Visitor Experience staff. Please do not look after visitors' belongings yourself; you cannot be responsible for them.

Breaks: If you need to take a short break during your volunteering, then please alert your supervisor/event organiser first. Volunteers helping over lunchtime or for a session longer than 3 hours will usually have a break built-in to the schedule. Your supervisor/event organiser will point out the toilets. Most venues have a place where you can sit down and have a drink or a snack. Please do not eat or drink outside of designated areas, as crumbs and spills attract pests that damage objects.

Security

- You may not volunteer outside of pre-arranged hours without your supervisor or other designated member of staff being present.
- They will manage your access to areas where you need to be. You must not let anyone else into any rooms that are not normally open to the public. Please close doors behind you, and please don't be offended if staff question who you are; they are being security-conscious and doing their job.
- Please report any suspicious activity, such as unattended bags or unknown people checking out security cameras or trying to follow you into spaces, to a member of staff. It is better to be safe and report.

- The threat of terrorism in the UK is real, but as a GLAM community, we can help increase our safety and protect ourselves. Your supervisor/event organiser should point out exit routes from public spaces in particular. For more information about the 'Run, Hide, Tell' protocol, watch this 40-second video: <https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/runhidetell/>.
- You must declare any unspent convictions relevant to working with collections.

Medical Conditions and First Aid: If a first aid incident occurs, please report it to a member of staff as quickly and calmly as possible. There will be a designated first aider present. If you have any medical conditions that we should be aware of in advance, or if you feel unwell whilst volunteering, please tell your supervisor/event organiser and/or the GLAM Volunteer Service.

Fire Safety and Evacuation:

- Your supervisor/event organiser will show you the nearest fire exits and tell you if the fire alarm is due to be tested. If you are unsure about exit points please ask. If the fire alarm sounds, please leave the building via the nearest exit and report to your supervisor/event organiser at the designated assembly point.
- If you discover a fire, press the break glass of the nearest Call Point (red square box on wall). Then immediately leave the building and report the fire's location to a member of staff. Do not attempt to tackle the fire yourself; you are not trained to do so.
- If you are volunteering behind the scenes and use headphones, make sure the volume is low enough so that you can hear the fire alarm.

Health and Safety

- Your supervisor/event organiser will have carried out a risk assessment for the tasks you will be doing. Please only do the tasks assessed and set by your supervisor/event organiser and follow any guidance/training given.
- If you see a potential safety hazard or feel uncomfortable about a task you have been asked to do, please tell your supervisor/event organiser or another member of staff.

Safeguarding

- Volunteers may be in spaces where children or adults at risk are present, or supporting activities targeted at these audiences. Volunteers at public events are there to help facilitate activities, NOT supervise children or adults at risk.
- For your own protection, as well as that of children, NEVER accept children for activities without a supervising adult present. Also, do NOT accept responsibility for looking after children, even if "only for a minute".
- Avoid inappropriate language or physical contact with children or adults at risk and being alone with them.
- Volunteers must not take photographs or videos of children or adults at risk using personal devices.
- If you come across a lost child or have any safeguarding concerns, alert a member of staff as quickly as possible in order to share the responsibility and ensure that action is taken.
- All safeguarding concerns or incidents must be reported immediately to a member of staff or the designated safeguarding lead (staff should know who that is). Do not promise confidentiality.
- Please remember that some volunteers may themselves be children or adults at risk.
- You must declare any unspent convictions relevant to working with children or adults at risk.

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Visitor Behaviour: Volunteers are not responsible for visitor behaviour. If you have any concerns, please address them to a member of staff who will decide the appropriate course of action.

Any Other Problems on the Day: Please refer to your supervisor/event organiser or to another member of staff.

I have read, understood, and agree to the above.

Signed: _____

Printed name: _____ Date: _____