

Museum-University Partnerships

Museum Jobs Decoder



National
Co-ordinating
Centre for
Public Engagement

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It can be difficult to work out who to contact if you are interested in developing a partnership with a museum. Museums and galleries can vary dramatically in size, and complexity, and similar roles will often be referred to by a variety of different titles. Clearly if you already have a contact at the museum you're looking to work with it is sensible to begin with an informal discussion to find out whom you should contact for your specific area of work.

Outreach

In a museum 'outreach' tends to refer to the museum's work to take their collections out to new audiences, or partnership work they are doing with local community groups. For academics it tends to mean taking your research to new audiences.

If you're looking to work with the museum on **outreach**, your first port of call will be the learning or public programmes team. Job titles are likely to include the following key words: Learning, Education, Educator, Outreach, Communities, Schools, Families, Events, Programme Developer. These skilled professionals will have lots of experience of developing effective activities, or workshops, and will be able to help you explore if and how you could work with them to bring your research to the public.

Exhibitions

Lots of universities want to either offer their expertise to develop new exhibitions or displays, or have ideas about how to offer opportunities to museum audiences to engage with their research. If you're looking to collaborate on an **exhibition or display** you will be looking for the curatorial or exhibitions team. Job titles are likely to include the following key words: Curator, Exhibitions, Display, Project Manager.

Remember, exhibitions are developed over a long period of time, and are one of the most significant investments that museums make. Therefore be sensitive to this when you make your approach.

Venue

You may want to use the museum as a **venue**, or have a more **ad hoc request**. For requests like this it is best to get in touch with the Museum Manager or equivalent. Job titles are likely to include the following key words: Events Manager, Venue Hire, Museum Manager, Site Manager, Centre Manager, Visitor Experience Manager, and Visitor Services.

General enquiries

Some of museums have 'info' or 'enquiry' email address. If you're not able to locate the correct person to get in touch with, you can send a summary to this email address and it will likely be directed to the correct department. Be sure to include as much detail as you're able to around what exactly you'd be looking for from the museum to enable to query to be directed to the most suitable contact.

In a similar manner, don't be afraid to call the museum and ask to be put through to a particular team or department. A personal call can make all the difference to getting the partnership started.

Size and Scale

Don't be afraid to approach a small museum, as they may be the perfect partner for you. However, bear in mind that some museums have no paid staff, and are volunteer led and run; some have only one paid member of staff – who covers all the work necessary to run the museum, usually supported by a dedicated volunteer team; and some have a very small team. Remember the resource implications for starting a partnership – and recognise that the timescales may be longer due to competing priorities.

Resource created by NCCPE and Gracie Divall, Natural History Museum.



**National
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Public Engagement**

The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) is internationally recognised for its work supporting and inspiring universities to engage with the public. We work to change perspectives, promote innovation, and nurture and celebrate excellence. We also champion meaningful engagement that makes a real and valued difference to people's lives.

The NCCPE is supported by the UK Higher Education Councils, Research Councils UK and Wellcome, and has been hosted by the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England since it was established in 2008.

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The Museum-University Partnership Initiative (MUPI) was supported by public funding from Arts Council England. It sought to enable museums and universities to meet together and develop mutually beneficial partnerships. A range of resources have been created, drawing on the learning from the MUPI project. You can find all these resources on the NCCPE website.



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