

# Career Center

## Resources for Exploring Careers in Museums and Outreach

Careers in museums and outreach focus on helping a public audience to learn and have access to interesting objects and experiences. Traditional museum careers include curators and conservators; now, however, museums employ a wide variety of other professionals, including educators, craftspeople, designers, technicians, fundraisers, and business people. The current focus for museums and galleries is on interpreting collections and opening them up to as many people as possible. See these videos for more detailed introductions.

- Various museum careers, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpM73OT-XTM>
- Curator positions, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qCDSPe2-uc>
- Museum careers from academic backgrounds, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVJ9yWNwGEU>

Other outreach careers can be found in many different settings including nonprofit education centers, youth camps, and in conjunction with school systems. In the sciences, this can also be called Informal Science Education (ISE).

### Compare Different Organizations with Museum and Outreach Roles

\* = in the Raleigh-Durham area; # = history of sponsoring visas from [myvisajobs.com](http://myvisajobs.com)

Search LinkedIn or Google Finance for these employers, and look for the section on related companies to help you identify others.

#### U.S. Government

- National Museum of American History
- Smithsonian Design Museum
- National Archives and Records Administration

#### State-Funded Public Museum

- Metropolitan Museum of Art
- North Carolina Museum of History\*
- California Science Center

#### Corporate Museum

- 21c Museum Hotel\*
- King Arthur Flour Museum
- Wells Fargo History Museum
- WWE

#### Preservation

- John Milner Associates Preservation
- Art Preservation Services

#### University Museum

- Nasher Museum of Art\*#
- Harvard University Museum of Natural History#
- African American Cultural Center, NCSU\*#

#### Exhibit Design

- ESI Design#
- ProExhibits
- Studio Displays, Inc.

#### Nonprofits

- Emily K Center\*
- Greensboro Science Center
- Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts



## Explore The Variety of Positions and Roles in Museums and Outreach

Look up these titles or fields on <http://www.indeed.com/> or LinkedIn to learn more about what projects they work on and what skills are needed. This information is also useful when writing your application documents and preparing for interviews.

### Curator/Exhibit Developer

- Create engaging experiences for different audiences
- Conduct field research
- Acquire, store, and arrange exhibits of the materials
- Oversee the care and display of objects and exhibits
- Assist registrars and designers in assembling the museum catalog

### Archivist

- Authenticate, appraise, and preserve documents and objects
- Create and manage electronic records
- Research and acquire new materials
- Exhibit designer
- Plan layout and display of objects in the space
- Contribute to creation of museum catalog, posters, brochures, and advertisements

### Educator/Programs

- Lead tours and programs for museum visitors
- Collaborate with curators and designers to develop exhibits from an educational perspective
- Make information from exhibits approachable to audiences of different ages and backgrounds

### Researcher/Professor

- Conduct research relevant to the focus of the museum
- Create opportunities for public to interact with current research topics
- Sometimes in joint appointment with a nearby university or college

### Registrar

- Manage the movement of catalogued materials
- Add new materials to the collections
- Oversee safety

### Program Coordinator

- Establish and run educational programs for specific groups
- Recruit and oversee volunteers
- Manage events
- Interact with public, students, participants

### Conservator

- Maintain the integrity of objects
- Keep detailed records of all conservation work done
- Maintain stable environmental conditions for objects on exhibit and in storage

### Public Relations Officer

- Write and distribute press releases and announcements to inform the school and the community about events
- Contact local television stations and newspapers with information about the museum
- Collaborate with designer to create promotional materials

### Development/Fundraising

- Develop and manage fundraising events and teams
- Create new events to promote particular topics or exhibits
- Reach out to and partner with donors, schools, and vendors

### Business Officer

- Write applications for grants from corporate sponsors
- Contact businesses, government agencies and charitable foundations
- Promote museums and their exhibitions
- Manage social media campaigns and invite critics to review exhibitions

## Seek Out These Additional Museum and Outreach Career Resources

Museum Planner blog

<http://museumplanner.org/>

Learning Science in Informal Environments: People, Places, and Pursuits

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/12190/learning-science-in-informal-environments-people-places-and-pursuits>

Surrounded by Science

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/12614/surrounded-by-science-learning-science-in-informal-environments>

Framework for Evaluating Impacts of Informal Science Education Projects

<http://www.informalscience.org/>

See museum and outreach professionals' career stories, sample application documents, and panel discussion on Versatile PhD

<https://gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/access-versatile-phd>

## Meet Museum and Outreach Professionals to Talk About Opportunities and Their Careers

Join a professional association

- American Association of Museums, <http://www.aam-us.org/>
- Association of Science and Technology Centers, <http://www.astc.org/>
- Association of Zoos and Aquariums, <https://www.aza.org/>
- National AfterSchool Association, <http://naaweb.org/>
- Citizen Science Association, <http://citizenscience.org/>
- Other associations listed on Cultural Connections, <http://cultural-connections.org/resources>

Participate in the Museum-L email list of museum professionals

<http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/wl.exe?SL1=MUSEUM-L&H=HOME.EASE.LSOFT.COM>

Contact Duke alumni and other professionals in museum and outreach roles for informational interviews

- Duke Alumni Association, <https://alumni.duke.edu/>
- Alumni on LinkedIn (use the Find Alumni tool under My Network)
- LinkedIn Groups: Museum & Art Galleries, National Emerging Museum Professionals Network, Small Museum Professionals

## Gain Experience

You can gain experience in many ways that involve different amounts of time investment.

Participate in existing outreach programs and internships

- Nasher Museum of Art, <http://nasher.duke.edu/opportunities/>
- Ackland Museum of Art, <http://ackland.org/support/get-involved/>
- NC Museum of Art volunteer, [http://ncartmuseum.org/get\\_involved/volunteers/](http://ncartmuseum.org/get_involved/volunteers/)
- NC Museum of Art intern, [http://ncartmuseum.org/get\\_involved/interns](http://ncartmuseum.org/get_involved/interns)
- Thompson Writing Program, <http://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio/community-outreach>
- Duke Office of Durham and Regional Affairs, <https://community.duke.edu/>
- Duke Center for Science Education, <https://sites.duke.edu/scied/>
- Duke Biology Dept., <https://biology.duke.edu/outreach>
- Duke Chemistry Dept., <https://chem.duke.edu/outreach>
- Center for Biomolecular and Tissue Engineering, <http://cbte.pratt.duke.edu/certificate/current-students>
- Pratt School of Engineering, <http://pratt.duke.edu/about/outreach/k-12>
- NC Museum of Natural Sciences volunteer, <http://naturalsciences.org/volunteer>
- NC Museum of Natural Sciences intern, <http://naturalsciences.org/support/internships>
- Museum of Life and Science, <http://www.lifeandscience.org/volunteer>

Duke Career Center • [studentaffairs.duke.edu/career](http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career) • 919-660-1050 • Bay 5, Smith Warehouse, 2nd Floor •  
114 S. Buchanan Blvd., Box 90950, Durham, NC 27708

## Gain Experience (cont.)

Take part in professional development programs from the American Alliance of Museums

<http://aam-us.org/resources/careers/professional-development-programs>

Intern at a museum such as the Smithsonian

<http://www.smithsonianofi.com/>

Intern at a museum such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art

<http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/internships>

Teach relevant age groups and develop instructional design skills through these opportunities

- Duke TIP, <http://tip.duke.edu/>
- BASS Connections, <https://gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/programs/bass-instructional-fellowships>
- Certificate in College Teaching, <https://gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/programs/certificate-college-teaching>
- Teaching-related courses at The Graduate School, <https://gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/programs/certificate-college-teaching/coursework>
- Teaching IDEAS workshops, <https://gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/programs/teaching-ideas-series>
- Teaching assistant positions in your department or other, undergraduate-focused departments

Participate in improv or acting classes to better interact with live audiences

DSI Comedy Theater, <http://www.dsicomedytheater.com/>

Communicate complex ideas from your field for lay audiences through a blog or social media

## Build These Specific Skill Sets and Highlight Them When Applying

We summarized the skills professionals mentioned in LinkedIn profiles and job postings. Particular jobs may not require all of these skill sets, so find out from online resources and professionals you meet which of these skills sets are most relevant.

### Expertise & research

- Relevant knowledge and understanding of relevant topics
- Stay current on developments in field
- Conduct background research
- Analyze historical evidence or evidence from the literature

### Communicate

- Write and speak to diverse audiences
- Teach
- Help students grasp complex and abstract concepts
- Break down complicated ideas into bite-sized pieces

### Organization

- Manage databases
- Keep records of exhibits and artifacts
- Detail-oriented

### Interpersonal

- Client-focused
- Customer service-oriented
- Interfacing with diverse stakeholders

### Project management

- Coordinate efforts on multiple, concurrent projects
- Produce under deadlines
- Budget management
- Collaborate
- Leadership

### Artistic (design/teaching roles)

- Drawing and/or computer-based design
- Use programs such as Quark Xpress, InDesign, and FreeHand
- Creativity
- Studio art experience

## Museum and Outreach Job Search Tools

Consider the common skills required by jobs and internships.

Museum Employment Resource Center, job listings for museums

<http://museum-employment.com/>

Global Museum, museum-focused job listings and news

<http://www.globalmuseum.org/>

HERCjobs, job listing for the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium

<http://www.hercjobs.org/>

Association of Science-Technology Centers Job Bank

<http://www.astc.org/job-bank/>

Idealist, nonprofit job listings

<http://www.idealist.org/>

HigherEdJobs

<https://www.higheredjobs.com/>

USAJobs, and career sites for state and local governments

<https://www.usajobs.gov/>

For application tips, <http://gogovernment.org/>

Fellowship/postdoc at Smithsonian

<http://www.smithsonianofi.com/>

Exhibit design firms listing

<http://www.officialmuseumdirectory.com/suppliers/exhibits/exhibit-design-firms.html>

AAAS Mass Media Science and Engineering Fellowship

<https://www.aaas.org/program/aaas-mass-media-science-engineering-fellows-program>