

Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology

The Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology Volunteer Policy

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1. Introduction

The Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology is owned and managed by the University of Reading, and is a part of the Department of Classics and University Museums and Special Collections Services (UMASCS). UMASCS is responsible for the direction of the Museum of English Rural Life, the university's Special Collections and for the strategic development of the university's other museums and related collections, including the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology, the Typography Collection, the Cole Museum of Zoology and the University Herbarium. Volunteers contribute to the activity of all of these university museums and collections.

The Ure Museum holds a collection of archaeological material, associated archives and modern replicas and casts. The archaeological collections are primarily Greek as well as Egyptian, Cypriot, and Roman. The archives comprise correspondence, photographs, diaries, notes, maps and ephemera relating to its founders, Annie and Percy Ure, and their research in archaeology in the early 20th century.

2. Purpose of the volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy describes how the Ure Museum recruits, involves and manages volunteers.

The purpose of the volunteer policy is to highlight and acknowledge the value and contribution made by volunteers and achieve clear, workable principles within which volunteers and their supervisors can operate.

3. Why do we involve volunteers?

Volunteers play an important role in the work of the Ure Museum. The museum views volunteer involvement not as a replacement or alternative to paid staff but as a way of expanding and enriching our activity and services. We also view volunteering as a way for the museum to involve and extend opportunities for people and communities and to include them in making contributions that help inform and shape how we operate, develop our programmes and engage audiences.

Volunteers participate in various areas including collection care, archives, education and digital projects. We also offer volunteering opportunities that provide work experience and that can be in support of many different areas of museum work. These opportunities are normally delivered in partnership with targeted schools and higher education institutions or youth or community organisations. Public participation in the work of the museum is welcomed.

Volunteer opportunities take place in the museum and at community events as part of our outreach programme, and can be adapted for virtual volunteering from home.

Being part of the university, undergraduate and postgraduate students can volunteer to gain practical experience related to their studies, gain new skills and prepare for employment.

4. What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who gives their time and skill willingly to an organisation without the expectation of financial reward (except in some circumstances when there are prearranged expenses – see Expenses section below).

A volunteer is not a replacement for a member of staff; their role is always different from that of a paid staff.

The volunteer role is based on mutual trust and understanding.

We do not enter into binding contracts or personal agreements with volunteers. No enforceable obligation, contractual obligation, contractual or otherwise will be enforced upon volunteers to attend.

Nevertheless, due to the important role that volunteers have in helping deliver programmes and activities, volunteers are expected to notify supervisors as soon as possible if they cannot attend an arranged shift. This enables the museums to make alternative plans for activities involving volunteers.

5. Recruitment process

The Ure Museum offers four main types of volunteering, and individual projects within these are advertised as they arise. There is a standard application form to complete, with the opportunity to highlight areas of particular interest. Each potential volunteer is required to complete an application

form before they are invited to an informal interview with a member of Ure Museum staff. Application forms are used to ensure the recruitment process is fair and consistent. We require two references from every potential volunteer before their start. If the references are satisfactory and there is a suitable vacancy in one of the volunteering roles then the potential volunteer will be invited to have an informal discussion with Ure Museum staff.

If a volunteering opportunity involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults and children – known as *Regulated Activity* – the potential volunteer is required to complete a DBS check, at no cost to the volunteer.

We can receive high numbers of volunteering requests and there is no guarantee that we will be able to accept every person who submits an application form.

6. Induction and training

A member of Ure Museum staff will run an induction for every new volunteer. An induction checklist, which will cover the following items, will be completed and signed by both the staff member doing the induction and the volunteer (this will be kept on record):

- Health and safety
- Fire procedures, including the location of fire exits
- A tour of the museum, highlighting all facilities
- Procedure for signing in and out of the museum
- The number of hours and timing of activity to be undertaken
- The designated supervisor for the role
- Where appropriate, the allocation of a buddy or mentor to support the new volunteer

Relevant training is provided for every volunteer entering their new role. Training is also provided throughout to enhance a volunteer's performance and provide them with more opportunities within the organisation.

Every volunteer will be given a Volunteer Handbook and asked to sign a volunteer agreement.

7. Support and supervision

Once a person is accepted as a volunteer they will be expected to comply with existing policies and procedures highlighted in the induction and/or Volunteer Manual.

Following the induction, volunteers will be provided with regular support and supervision meetings with Ure Museum staff to identify areas for development or additional support and to discuss any issues.

If a volunteer has other commitments or holidays on their regular volunteering day then they should inform their supervisor to ensure there is an alternative cover. If a volunteer requires a longer period of absence then the museum will try to be as flexible as possible, but cannot guarantee a return to a volunteering role.

8. Expenses

The Ure Museum is not able to pay for expenses for travel to and from the museum.

We can provide travel expenses to attend special events off-site (by prior arrangement), such as outreach activities. Under exceptional circumstances to enable volunteers to participate in specific projects and activities funding may also be available to meet volunteer expenses.

9. Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the University of Reading's public liability insurance policy. The insurance certificate is displayed in the Ure Museum office and on the university's website, a copy of which can be provided by museum staff on request.

10. Equality and diversity

We respect and value diversity within our volunteering team. While we are committed to equal opportunities for all, we recognise that to promote inclusion for those who are under-represented in the museum sector we need to offer innovative opportunities that build skills and experience for a wider range of people.

Therefore, we encourage applicants who are under-represented in our current volunteering team to apply, including ethnically diverse applicants, applicants with a disability or who are neurodivergent and applicants from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

The acceptance of a volunteer for a particular role will be made on the individual's suitability to carry out the specified tasks, subject to the needs and restrictions of the museum.

11. Health and safety

Volunteers receive health and safety training relevant to their role in their induction and if their role changes. We as an organisation recognise that health and safety is the responsibility of everyone. Our health and safety policy is provided as part of the induction and in the Volunteer Handbook.

12. Safeguarding

To safeguard the welfare of vulnerable children and adults, the Ure Museum is guided by the University of Reading's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy (reading.ac.uk/chaplaincy/-/media/project/functions/chaplaincy/documents/uor-safeguarding-policy.pdf).

If anyone (staff, volunteer, student or member of the public) has concerns over a child/vulnerable adult or a child/vulnerable adult confides in a member of staff in relation to another member of staff/volunteer or student's actions, they should report this immediately to a Designated

Safeguarding Leads (DSL). The university has assigned DSL throughout the different functions; Isabel Hughes at the Museum of English Rural Life is the DSL for the Ure Museum.

Where there is a requirement for a disclosure check for a particular role this will be highlighted as part of the volunteer recruitment process.

13. Data protection and confidentiality

Records are kept for all volunteers. These records include contact details for the volunteer and their emergency contact, a record of the projects worked on, training undertaken, areas of interest and the hours volunteered on a project.

Data collection and processing is in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Any hard copy personal data is held securely at the Ure Museum in a locked filing cabinet.

Any digital documents containing personal information are held on a password protected computer database and will not be shared with any third parties, in line with the University of Reading's data protection and GDPR guidelines.

Volunteers' data is also used collectively for management reports. Personal information on individual volunteers is not shared with any external bodies or other departments outside of the University Museums and Special Collections Service without prior permission.

To maintain up-to-date records, volunteers should inform their supervisor of any changes to personal details, address or contact details.

Volunteers have the right to object to the use of their data for any of the purposes above.

14. Copyright

All written and photographic materials, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically, which was made or acquired by a volunteer during the course of their volunteering is the property and copyright of the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology.

15. Problem solving

The Ure Museum is committed to dealing with any problem that arises as quickly and fairly as possible. We aim to treat all volunteers objectively and consistently. Where a concern is highlighted, either by a volunteer or about a volunteer, this will be dealt with initially informally through their supervisor. If an informal approach cannot resolve the issue then it will be referred to the Curator who will conduct their own investigation and resolution. The decision of the Curator as to the outcome of any problem is final.

16. Review of the Volunteering Policy

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure it is in keeping with current changes in the organisation and voluntary sector.

Date reviewed: 26/03/2024

Policy Review date: 25/03/2024