

Role title	Assistant Curator
Employer	University of Birmingham
College	College of Arts and Law
School/Department	The Barber Institute of Fine Arts
Full time/Part time	Full time
Duration of the Role	Permanent
Salary	Grade 5
Terms and Conditions	Support Staff
Role Location	The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

Department overview

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts is an internationally important art collection, gallery and concert hall housed in a Grade I-listed Art Deco building, located at the heart of the University of Birmingham's Edgbaston campus.

Established in 1932 'for the study and encouragement of Art and Music', our mission derives from the far-sighted vision of our founder, Lady Barber. The jewel in the cultural crown of the University, the Barber uses its world-class collections to create inspirational opportunities for learning and enjoyment for students, staff and the wider public.

The Barber Institute is one of the UK's foremost university arts centres and enjoys an international reputation for its art collection, exhibitions and concert programme. Often described as a mini-National Gallery for the Midlands, its collection includes masterpieces by many of the major names in the history of western art, including Botticelli, Degas, Kollwitz, Monet, Rubens, Turner, Vigée-Lebrun, Van Gogh and others. Its collection of Roman, Byzantine and mediaeval coins is one of the most important in the world.

The Barber team organises a popular and successful programme of exhibitions and displays, along with an innovative, critically engaged learning and engagement programme. At the University of Birmingham, the Barber is part of the College of Arts and Law; as such it enjoys close relationships with numerous departments, including History of Art, which is housed and taught within the building, and cross-disciplinary departments within the wider University. The Barber is seeking to consolidate and grow its existing and loyal visitor base, while developing new and underrepresented audiences.

The University of Birmingham's Offer to You

People are at the heart of what we are and do.

The University of Birmingham is proud to have been a part of the City of Birmingham and the wider region for over 100 years, and we are equally proud to be recognised as a leading global university. We want to attract talented people from across the city and beyond, support them to succeed, and celebrate their success. We are committed to helping the people who work here to develop through our sector-leading Birmingham Professional programme which provides all professional services staff with development opportunities and the encouragement to reach their full potential.

We believe that diversity is a source of strength that underpins the exchange of ideas, innovation, and debate. We warmly welcome people from all backgrounds and are committed to fostering an inclusive environment.

The University is situated in leafy Edgbaston and there are excellent transport links to our beautiful campus, including main bus routes and a train station on site. On campus we have a state-of-the-art sports centre with pool, shops, places to eat and drink, our own art gallery, museum and botanical gardens.

Find out more about the [benefits of working for the University of Birmingham](https://bham.sharepoint.com/sites/Rewards).
<https://bham.sharepoint.com/sites/Rewards>

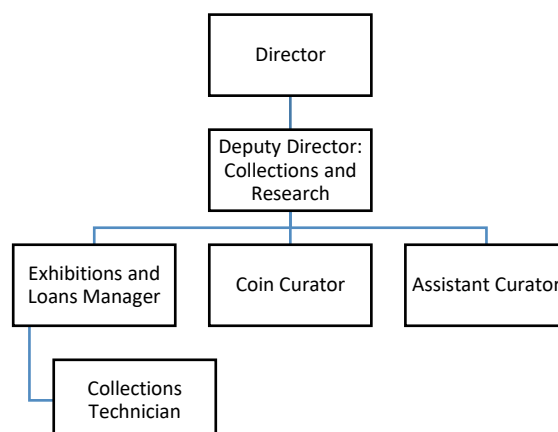
The University has global reach, including several partnerships with other leading universities around the world, and is grounded in its local community, having opened the first fully comprehensive University secondary school in the country in 2015. We are an ambitious and successful research-intensive University (one of the top 100 research-led universities globally) and have produced 10 Nobel Prize winners, including three who received their awards in 2016. Academics here are exploring the impact of climate change, helping to address global health epidemics, and changing our understanding of Shakespeare. Our students come from nearly 150 countries and our flagship outreach programmes mean that almost 25% of our student population come from underrepresented backgrounds: one of the highest proportions in the UK.

Job summary

Do you want to be part of a dynamic and creative team and play a key role in caring for the Barber's world-class collections and contributing significantly to its exhibition and display programme? Do you enjoy engaging directly with works of art and are you excited by the possibilities of research, writing and public speaking? This is a pivotal role within the Barber Institute's collection team and would suit a candidate who is eager to bring ideas, enthusiasm and knowledge to the organisation.

The postholder will assist the Deputy Director: Collections and Research and the Exhibitions and Loans Manager, and work alongside the Collections Technician in the day-to-day management of the galleries and the collections of the Barber Institute, and contribute to curating and managing temporary exhibitions, displays and loans. They will manage the Barber Institute's image library and assist with the supervision of curatorial interns, placements and volunteers.

Organisation chart



Main duties

Collections Documentation and Care

- To be responsible for maintaining and developing the Barber's collection records on its collection management system (Mimsy) through research and documentation; updating

inventories and location indexes, entering and updating data, liaising with the Collections Technician, as required.

- To be responsible for the good order and timely updating/ accuracy of physical curatorial files and website collections pages (in liaison with Communications and Marketing), and regularly auditing these.
- To work closely with the Collections Technician in the movement and installation of works of art for permanent displays, temporary exhibitions and special projects.
- To work closely with the Collections Technician in ensuring that the presentation of the galleries is always in immaculate order for visitors to enjoy. This to include supporting the Collections Technician, as required, with: daily checks of all galleries and storage areas; periodic gallery cleans, ensuring that cases, glazing, sculpture and frames on display are kept clean and dust free.
- To assist the Deputy Director: Collections and Research with the writing and layout of gallery labels.
- To assist, as delegated, with collection-management, conservation and security projects, including object-marking, storage and Accreditation requirements.

Collections Enquiries

- To respond in the first instance to all collections-related enquiries (other than for the coin collection), whether public, student or academic, online, by phone or in person, where appropriate passing them on to the Deputy Director: Collections and Research. This to include logging the enquiries, researching and preparing responses.
- To facilitate public, student and academic access to the collections, physical and digital; this includes organising viewings and appointments for visiting researchers, supervising access to, and use of, the Prints and Drawings Study Room.

Collections Research

- To have primary responsibility for the care and documentation of the works on paper collections, including identifying conservation priorities.
- To identify and develop collections-research projects, primarily, but not exclusively, relating to the works on paper collection, and to include online/ website outputs.
- To contribute to collection reinterpretation initiatives.
- To contribute to research-led public programme initiatives, e.g. leading the organisation of conferences and study days in collaboration with the Learning and Engagement team.
- To deliver occasional short gallery talks and podcasts on featured works of art.

Exhibitions, Displays and Loans

- Under the supervision of the Deputy Director: Collections and Research, to take the lead on the management and ideation for the Print Bay (works on paper) displays programme, suggesting new subjects and delivering them, and helping to identify other guest curators. To include liaising with learning and marketing colleagues, and with designers and printers, sourcing quotes, ordering goods and services in line with University of Birmingham financial systems and processes.
- Working with senior colleagues, to assist with the curating of temporary exhibitions. This might include researching the work of collection artists or living artists; also liaising with artists, external curators and academics on exhibition projects; preparing loan lists.
- To minute exhibition planning meetings.
- To assist the Exhibitions and Loans Manager with exhibition and long-term loans administration, preparing and sending loan request and acknowledgement letters, maintaining loans lists and assisting with applications for coverage of loans under the Government Indemnity Scheme.
- To act occasionally as sole courier for loans out, accompanying Barber works of art in transit and installation, nationally and internationally, as required (training will be provided).

- To assist the Collections Technician in packing works for loan out

Image Library

- To manage the Barber's image library, including internal and external academic image requests, arranging new photography, and liaising with Bridgeman Images UK (commercial requests); to develop knowledge of current image copyright regulations and image library best practice.
- Liaising with the Barber curator/ editor, to manage Barber exhibition image orders and permissions (for publications and interpretation), including payments and contracts, and helping to ensure kept to budget and schedule.

Other Duties

- To assist in the supervision of collections and exhibitions interns, placements, volunteers and work-experience students.
- To represent the Deputy Director: Collections and Research at internal and external meetings, as required.
- To work collaboratively within the team and organisation and participate in team and programming meetings.
- To demonstrate respect for others in the workplace.
- To perform any other duties suitable for the post as may be reasonably requested.

Person Specification

Required Knowledge, Skills, Qualifications, Experience

- Degree in History of Art or a related degree with a strong component of History of Art modules, or commensurate practical work experience.
- Demonstrable experience of working in a museum or art gallery.
- Experience in handling works of art.
- Excellent organisational and administrative skills, with exemplary attention to deadlines and detail.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills, both written and oral.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, to build effective relationships with colleagues, volunteers and visitors, etc.
- Ability to work quickly and accurately under pressure, and to be flexible and use judgement to prioritise workload.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office programs.
- Knowledge of database software, especially collection management systems.
- Minimum of grade C/4 in Mathematics and English at GCSE or equivalent level 2 qualifications.
- Willingness to undertake further training relevant to remit of post.
- Willingness to work out of hours when acting as a courier, or when assisting with events as activities, as required.
- The desire to support colleagues in the achievement of their individual and the collective goals, and to celebrate others' success as positively as your own.
- Understands the importance of equality and diversity in the workplace. Ability to identify and respond to equality and diversity issues in line with relevant policies and procedures.

Desirable:

- Postgraduate qualification in museum or gallery studies, or commensurate practical work experience.

Dimensions

- Supports the line management of interns and volunteers, under the direction of the Deputy Director of Collections and Research [DDCR].

- Supports the purchasing and record of small budget items, such as gallery wall texts, under the direction of the DDCR.
- Represents the Barber Institute and disseminates knowledge about its work and collection to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

Planning and organising

- Will plan their own workload with support from the DDCR and in collaboration with the Collections teams.
- Will take responsibility for planning their own diary and prioritising their workload, working to the strategic priorities of the team (set by the DDCR) and Director.
- Short (one day task and finish) and long-term (one-year project for example) planning will be required.
- Responsible for the curatorial and collections research work of the Barber Institute.

Problem solving and decision making

- Role holder will follow museum accreditation procedures for all main areas of collections work and related decision making.
- The role holder will need to make some decisions about their work independently, but usually key decisions will be made on collaboration with, and reported to, the DDCR.

Internal and external relationships

- DDCR as line manager and in planning and delivery of work.
- Director.
- Collections team – working and collaborating closely with Exhibitions and Loans Manager and with Collections Technician.
- Learning and Engagement team – working collaboratively on events for the wider programme
- Comms and Marketing team – working to ensure that the website is updated and that collections and research is presented to the best possible standard.
- External – collections colleagues within the wider UOB- including Research and Cultural Collections, Lapworth, Winterbourne, Special Collections; curatorial colleagues within the wider City (BMAG, Grand Union, etc). Major Funders – Henry Barber Trust, Arts Council, private collectors.

Our Shared Values

Each professional services area will outline how the values apply in their area and the behaviours expected from colleagues to ensure we embed them in everything we do

Ambitious	Innovative	Open	Collaborative	Responsible
We are confident in the University of Birmingham and project this globally. We are focused on our goals, are clear about our strengths, and pursue our own direction. We are bold and take intelligent risks.	We enjoy being the first to do things. Inspired by our Birmingham heritage, we are resourceful, creative, grounded, and practical, and seek to make a real and positive difference to the world around us.	We welcome colleagues, collaborators, and students from across the world to work and study with us. We are committed to academic freedom, freedom of speech, and equality of opportunity for all. We expect everyone to act with sensitivity, respect, and fairness.	The major challenges facing our city, nation, and the world cannot be solved if we act alone. We enhance our research and education by pursuing creative partnerships within and beyond the University.	We operate with transparency, trust, and respect. We value our role as an anchor institution for Birmingham. We strive to be an excellent employer, to reduce inequalities in access to education, and to place sustainability at the heart of our work.

How to apply

Please apply for this role through the University of Birmingham's online portal and application process, [Oracle](#).

Please note that applications and CV's sent direct to the Collections Team will not be considered.

Closing date for submissions: Sunday 1st October 2023, 12pm

Other Information

Interviews are planning to take place w/c 23rd October 2023.

Please note that interviews will be held if possible in person at the Barber Institute. This will be confirmed on invite to interview.

Due to the high number of candidate submissions we get for our roles, please note that we're sorry that we cannot respond to each one individually. If you have not heard from the team directly by the end of October 2023, please take this as not having been successful in shortlisting for interview.

Target Start Date: w/c 4th December 2023.

Note

Applicants must be able to provide evidence of their right to work in the UK.

Once an offer of employment has been accepted, the successful candidate will be required to undergo a basic Disclosure and Baring check (DBS criminal records check), which will be processed and paid for by the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

As an employee of the University of Birmingham the post-holder will have access to a range of benefits including generous annual leave, participation in the University's reward and recognition scheme and a range of training and development opportunities. For further details visit: www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/employeebenefits/index.aspx#Holidays

We value diversity at the University of Birmingham and welcome applications from all sections of the community. **Valuing excellence; sustaining investment**