

UGA Special Collections Libraries Student Docent Program

Overview

In Spring 2022, the University of Georgia's Special Collections Libraries will recruit a new class of participants for the Student Docent Program. Our goal is to recruit UGA undergraduate and graduate students who are committed to leading engaging tours of the exhibit galleries for visitors of all ages. Participants in the program will develop skills in archival research, public speaking, and community outreach. They will also gain valuable work experience in both archive and museum settings.

We will accept applications through Friday, February 4, 2022; In-person interviews for selected applicants will be scheduled from February 7-18. Candidates selected for admission to the program will be notified by Friday, February 25, 2022.

Note: Applicants to the program should be currently enrolled undergraduate or graduate students at the University of Georgia who can commit to participating in the program for one year (February 2022 – May 2023).

To apply, visit: tinyurl.com/289usxpj

Training Scope/Schedule

Training sessions will take place at the Special Collections Building on Mondays from 3-5PM on the following dates: March 14, 21, 28; April 4, 11, 18

Led by members of the Special Collections staff, early content sessions will largely focus on the mission, collections, and work of the three libraries housed at the Special Collections Building: the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection, and the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies. Trainees will become more familiar with these libraries and the items on exhibit in their respective galleries. Subsequent sessions will provide information about the building itself, the storage vault, research policies and procedures, and acquaint trainees with the various event and classroom spaces, their equipment, and ongoing and upcoming programs and events.

In addition to building content knowledge of the libraries and exhibits, docents will receive instruction on how to engage with visitors, create tours for specialized groups, and handle difficult questions.

Note: Participants should be comfortable with public speaking at the outset, but subsequent instruction and practice should help to enhance their ability to create engaging tours for the public.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the required time commitment for the Student Docent Program?

Trainees must commit to attending the six-week training period (10 hours). If you must miss a session, you may bring your case to the attention of the Docent Coordinator for consideration.

If a training session is missed, a docent trainee must:

- contact the Docent Coordinator (in advance, when possible) to notify them of the absence and to obtain session materials
- prepare for and be tested on this material at the next training session

Following the six-week training, docents will have the option to work during the summer of 2022. During this period, docents will be paid \$10/hour to work for up to 10 hours per week for ten weeks to research and write a full tour script, including 4 tour stops and 2 gallery games. Docents will then commit to working for the Special Collections Libraries through the Spring 2023 semester, spending 8-10 hours per month leading tours, researching and writing new tour stops, and attending regular docent meetings. Docents will also have the option of taking on shifts in reading room.

What is the required reading for docent training?

Participants will receive a digital docent handbook, containing overview information on the Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscripts Library, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, and the Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection, as well as information on the exhibits currently on display in the galleries of the Special Collections Building.

Additional information will be added to the handbook as needed (ex. changing exhibitions). Participants will be responsible for reviewing this information on their own and will be tested during subsequent sessions. The notebook will also contain a set of optional readings focused on docent training and tips for giving tours drawn from outside sources.

How do we know when you are ready to give tours?

First, participants will take the quizzes on each of the content of sessions delivered. Quizzes will serve as a litmus test -- helping us to understand what information has been retained, what delivery systems worked or did not, and what if any follow up training might be needed.

In addition to these written tests, participants will be required to:

- Shadow two tours during the Spring semester 2022
- Participate in a group checkout tour during the final training session on April 18, 2022
 - Each student docent trainee will deliver a tour stop and gallery game they have developed during the five-week training.

How much will I be paid as a student docent?

If accepted to the program, you will complete the training sessions as a volunteer. That will include 10 hours of training classes; shadowing 2 tours (2 hours); plus additional time outside of classes to study your material and research and write one tour stop for the checkout tour (5 hours). In total, we anticipate you will volunteer approximately 17 hours of your time during this phase of the program.

Applicants who successfully complete the training and checkout tour will have the option to work up to 100 hours during the summer of 2022 at a rate of \$10/hour. This work will consist of researching and writing tour scripts and/or producing virtual tour videos. The finished products of summer work must be submitted to the Docent Coordinator before the start of the Fall 2022 semester.

Docents will be eligible to begin leading guided tours for the public in Fall 2022. Guides will be paid \$10/hour to lead or co-lead tours for visitors to the Special Collections Building. The number of hours available will depend on the demand for tours each semester, but we anticipate each guide will work 8-10 hours per month during the semester. Docents will also have the option to work desk shifts in the reading room as available, for the same rate of pay. Guides will also be required to attend monthly meetings to check in on progress, sign up for tours, and review new content in the galleries with curators.