

Head of Exhibitions & Design | National Museums Scotland

Salary as per job advertisement plus membership of Civil Service Pension Scheme

We are recruiting for an exceptional individual to lead National Museums Scotland's Exhibitions & Design function.

Based primarily at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, you will lead the team responsible for the development and delivery of exhibitions and design projects across the organisation, helping to shape how audiences experience and engage with Scotland's National Collection.

Working collaboratively with colleagues from across National Museums Scotland, you will provide leadership for a diverse programme of temporary exhibitions, touring exhibitions, gallery developments and design initiatives. You will play an important role in ensuring that our exhibitions and visitor experiences are creative, accessible, audience-focused and aligned with the organisation's strategic priorities.

The successful candidate will bring significant leadership experience together with a strong track record in exhibitions, design, project delivery and team development. You will be an effective collaborator, comfortable working across multiple disciplines and able to balance creativity, quality and operational delivery to achieve outstanding results.

Learn more about National Museums Scotland and our history [here](#).

To find out more about how to apply, as well as our employee benefits, use of AI in recruitment and general recruitment information please visit our [careers portal](#).



JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Head of Exhibitions and Design		
Department: Exhibitions and Design	Section: Exhibitions and Design	Location: National Museum of Scotland
Directorate: Public Programmes	Grade: D	Hours: As per job advert

Purpose of post:

To provide vision and leadership for the exhibitions programme, permanent display projects, gallery maintenance and all design and technical services across National Museums Scotland, with the aim of engaging visitors and audiences with objects and stories from the national collections.

Key responsibilities:

- To be responsible for the development, planning and delivery of a strategically driven, engaging and coordinated programme of world class exhibitions and their touring
- To take overall responsibility for a programme of investments in our permanent displays coordinating a series of capital investments and refreshment projects
- To take overall responsibility for the display maintenance programme across all National Museum Scotland sites
- To be responsible for the delivery of high quality and effective interpretation of visitor content outputs across National Museum Scotland sites
- Create and deliver a programme that supports engagement with and enjoyment of the national collection for a broad range of participants, demonstrating commitment to our equality, diversity and inclusion policies, plans and practices
- Develop partnerships with key external organisations, agencies, groups and individuals to help supplement and extend our areas of expertise; broaden our services and reach target audiences
- To lead and maintain high standards of design quality, consistency and coherence across National Museum Scotland sites, including exhibitions, permanent displays, brand development, and communication channels
- To take overall responsibility for ensuring effective departmental procurement and management of contractors, consultants and services, ensuring value for money and quality of delivery
- To manage and lead the Exhibition and Design Department and its resources

- To be committed to good health & safety practices and ensure familiarity with relevant policies, procedures and guidelines
- To undertake any other reasonably required duties as instructed by line manager or someone acting on their behalf, in addition to the role specific responsibilities detailed above.

Expected Outcomes:

- Delivery of a high quality, innovative and financially sustainable programme of exhibitions, gallery displays and design projects that maximises the value of National Museums Scotland's collections and increases audience engagement and external financial support
- Exhibitions and display programmes successfully engage diverse existing and new audiences across National Museums Scotland sites
- A well performing, appropriately resourced and effectively managed Exhibitions and Design function that delivers agreed organisational objective
- A touring exhibition programme that extends our reputation and reach, nationally and internationally, as well as meeting agreed financial targets
- Exhibitions and permanent galleries consistently demonstrate high-quality interpretation, design and build standards that reflect sector best practice and support National Museums Scotland's reputation nationally and internationally
- Strong collaborative working across National Museums Scotland, enabling the effective planning and delivery of exhibitions, displays and design projects.

Reports to: Director of Public Programmes

Facts and figures:

Budget: Operating budget £1.1m excluding salaries

Staff Managed: Five direct reports (four Managers and one Departmental Administrator), Approximately 19 staff indirectly managed.

Other: Project-related staff and budgets as appropriate, 3.4 million visitors across all sites

Thinking Skills: (Judgements/decisions made):

- Strategic thinking across a broad range of organisational and business issues
- Creative thinking regarding ideas and approaches for the public programme
- Balancing Departmental resources in order to deliver a demanding programme to meet strategic priorities and audience needs and expectations

- Providing effective leadership and support to an experienced autonomous team, recognising individual expertise, encouraging professional development and ensuring a balanced and consistent approach across all areas of responsibility
- Making pragmatic decisions at a senior level on departmental projects and organisational issues that affect programme delivery, recognising when issues require referral to executive level for information, guidance or consultation, as appropriate
- Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of emerging practices, trends and innovations in exhibition development, gallery displays and museum design
- Applying sound judgement, creative problem-solving and decision-making where established solutions or precedents are not readily available.

Communication and Contact:

Internal: Other members of the Public Programmes Directorate; museum staff at all levels (curatorial, conservation, front of house, national and international, digital media, marketing, development, estates, finance); volunteers; Directorate, and Trustees

External: Museums and galleries nationally and internationally; a wide range of heritage and cultural bodies; funding bodies; sponsors; lenders; press and media; broad range of audience groups and stakeholders; a broad range of design and exhibitions related contractors and consultants.

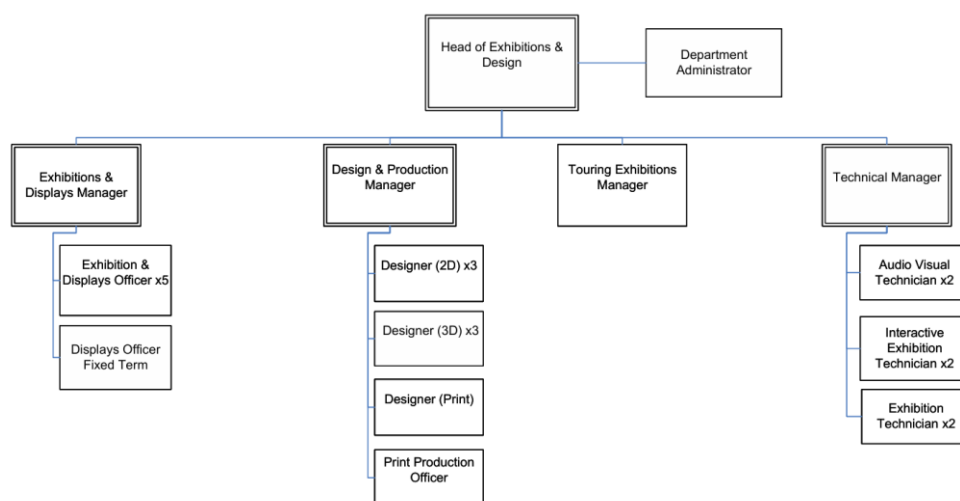
Most challenging parts of the job:

- Planning and delivering coherent and inspiring visitor content and experiences through an integrated programme, while balancing competing priorities and maintaining quality within increasing financial constraints
- Securing internal stakeholder buy-in and enabling effective cross-organisation working to support the successful delivery of the programme
- Maintaining high standards of 2D, 3D and brand design across National Museums Scotland
- Developing and sustaining effective external partnerships
- Ensuring permanent display projects and the gallery maintenance programme are appropriately planned, properly resourced and delivered consistently.

Other Requirements, e.g. multi-site working, on call, etc.:

- Must be willing to travel to other National Museums' sites and other local sites as required
- Must be willing to travel nationally and internationally as a senior representative of National Museums Scotland
- Out-of-hours working to support the public programme as required.

Organisational Chart, Exhibitions & Design:



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title:

Head of Exhibitions and Design

Department:

Exhibitions and Design

Section:

Exhibitions and Design

Location:

National Museum of Scotland

Directorate: Public Programmes

Grade:D

Hours: As per job advert

Knowledge	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
Degree level qualification in a relevant discipline (for example Museum Studies, Exhibition Design, Design Management, Architecture, Heritage Management, Cultural Management or a related field) or equivalent relevant professional experience	Essential	Certificate/CV
A strong understanding of audience needs and expectations in relation to exhibitions and permanent displays	Essential	Application/ Selection Event
A sound working knowledge of recognised project management principles and practices	Essential	Application/ Selection Event
A working knowledge of tendering and procurement processes and procedures	Essential	Application/ Selection Event

Knowledge of current practice and emerging trends in exhibition development, gallery displays and interpretive design within the museum sector	Desirable	Application/ Selection Event
An understanding of current thinking and best practice across a broad range of museum-related areas, including learning, collections management, curatorial practice, funding and income generation, governance, stakeholder management and partnership working	Desirable	Application/ Selection Event

Skills	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
Ability to provide effective leadership and motivate and develop multidisciplinary teams, enabling them to work autonomously and collaboratively to achieve organisational objectives	Essential	Application/ Selection Event
Ability to champion innovation, creativity and continuous improvement, balancing new approaches with organisational standards and priorities	Essential	Application/ Selection Event
Ability and willingness to travel, nationally and internationally, to fulfil the requirements of the role	Essential	Application/ Selection Event
Proven ability to provide strategic leadership and direction across complex exhibition, design and visitor-focused programmes	Essential	Application/ Selection Event
Ability to analyse complex business issues, assess risks and communicate findings clearly and logically using recognised project management methodologies	Desirable	Application/ Selection Event
Experience of applying audience research, user centred design and co-creation methodologies to inform exhibition development and visitor experiences	Desirable	Application/ Selection Event

Knowledge of public sector procurement processes and contractor management	Desirable	Application/Selection Event
Ability to exercise sound judgement, make pragmatic decisions and resolve complex problems in a dynamic and fast-paced environment	Desirable	Application/Selection Event

Experience	Essential or desirable	Evidence assessed by
Significant experience of managing high profile exhibition and permanent display projects in a museum, visitor attraction or heritage attraction environment	Essential	Application/Selection Event
Experience of developing, managing and monitoring significant operational and project budgets	Essential	Application/Selection Event
Experience of managing a range of people management issues, commensurate with senior manager-level responsibilities	Essential	Application/Selection Event
Experience of developing, writing and implementing effective business strategies	Desirable	Application/Selection Event
Proven experience of delivering successful audience development strategies	Desirable	Application/Selection Event
Proven experience of successfully leading and implementing change, bringing people together to adopt new ways of working	Desirable	Application/Selection Event
Experience of communicating with a diverse range of stakeholders on high profile projects	Desirable	Application/Selection Event
Experience of commissioning and managing external consultants, contractors and suppliers to deliver projects effectively and to agreed standards	Desirable	Application / Selection Event



National Museums Scotland utilises a Competency Framework. Individuals for this post are expected to demonstrate competence across the relevant levels for the position; the following will be assessed throughout the recruitment process, primarily at our Selection Events.

Competency	Level	Detail
Building Relationships Works effectively and professionally as part of their team and co-operates with others across the organisation; collaborates and networks externally for specific outcomes and projects; forms partnerships, nationally and internationally for mutual benefit.	4	Builds strategic external and internal collaborations and partnerships - Proactively engages across the organisation to see things from others perspective and ensures they understand how their work matters to the bigger picture - Actively seeks opportunities to raise the profile and reputation of National Museums Scotland - Partners with senior colleagues to model effective team working, collaborative and partnership behaviour - Proactively manages complexities and tensions and adapts the relationships to ensure organizational interests continue to be met - Monitors the sector and landscape to identify potential partners and creates opportunities for strategic collaborations, nationally and internationally.
Communicating & Engaging Uses communication and interpersonal skills flexibly across all channels of communication, to engage, influence, persuade and negotiate ensuring a shared understanding and commitment to act.	4	Inspires and communicates strategically - Inspires others and creates momentum through effective communication - Cascades information effectively building trust, fostering integrity, and creating understanding - Gains real commitment and 'buy-in' from others when undertaking new ventures - Acts as a powerful advocate, comfortably communicating with and influencing senior external stakeholders across a broad range of issues - Negotiates effectively on behalf of National Museums Scotland with senior stakeholders.

Focussing on your Customers Places the customer at the heart of what they do, engages, listens and responds to deliver exemplary service, creating an outstanding experience; supporting a culture of service excellence, both internally and externally.	4	Strategically develops our customer profile and services • Creates a culture where customer feedback is viewed as an essential source of data that influences decision making • Focuses on customer development from a strategic perspective, identifying new markets and ways to reach these • Sets the standard and demonstrates exemplary customer service, knowledge and behaviours adding value to services and delivery • Understands the wider organisational and societal issues customers face and thinks about the consequences of any given decision • Develops strategies and initiates projects that are consistent with customer priorities meeting the needs of our diverse customers.
Improving & Innovating Builds personal, professional and organisational capability by keeping up-to-date, being creative, sharing ideas, taking risks, looking inside and out to continuously improve National Museums Scotland.	4	Strategically develops our role within the sector • Considers opportunities in the sector and beyond and makes steps to capitalise on them • Understands the risks associated with innovation and supports learning from mistakes • Develops a culture of organisational learning and continuous improvement • Anticipates the impact of innovation and change on staff and stakeholders and takes steps to plan for them • Proactively seeks feedback on own and department's performance and acts on it to develop and excel.
Leading and Managing Sets direction and standards to drive individual, team and organisational performance by involving, supporting, developing and enabling staff and others to effectively contribute to the present and the future of National Museums Scotland.	4	Leads and transforms • Builds ownership and accountability by involving others and delegates the details to experts • Brings the Strategic Plan to life by providing clarity on how everyone can contribute • Visibly leads; models and encourages success through words and actions • Helps shape and articulate the future for National Museums Scotland creating an inspiring vision, values and priorities. • Creates a culture where talent is acknowledged, recognised and developed.

Planning for Success Ensures effective delivery and completion by realistically planning and prioritising tasks and managing workload; develops and manages plans, programmes and projects, in consultation with stakeholders and within existing priorities, people resources and budgets.	4	Plans at a strategic level • Sets strategic plans within the context of existing and potential opportunities, threats and risks at a strategic level • Manages the 'big picture' in relation to the trade-off between quality, cost, time, visitor numbers, academic contribution and reputation • Makes timely decisions and commits to a defined course of action which will have a long-term impact on National Museums • Balances the organisational priorities, people and task; and aligns with available resources for allocation and programming • Ensures strategic priorities are clear and resources are in place to deliver.

For more information about joining National Museums Scotland please see [here](#).