University of Edinburgh
Job Description

1. Job Details

Job title: Project Archivist

School/Support Department: IS/Library, Museums and Galleries

Unit (if applicable): Collections Division

Line manager: Special Collections Manager and University Archivist

2. Job Purpose

To manage and deliver archives/manuscripts projects, to generate external/internal project funding based on archives and manuscript collections and to provide professional support for the Deputy University Archivist

3. Main Responsibilities

1. Manage, participate in and deliver archival management and description projects, - collection surveys and assessments, research in provenancial and custodial backgrounds of collections and creation of on-line web resources to international standards to ensure project objectives

2. Ongoing liaison with internal/external academic project partners to, disseminate project deliverables to the academic and wider public communities and encourage exponential project development/funding

3. Identify and research funding sources for archival management and description projects such as development of on-line finding aids, conservation and digital preservation, so as to match collection development plans with appropriate funding agencies

4. Preparation and co-ordination of project bids, associated administration and academic liaison to ensure timely take-up of funding opportunities

5. Manage dedicated project staff, budgets and equipment in line with procedures and regulations of the University and funding agencies

6. Provide support as required for the Deputy University Archivist, - archival appraisal, transfers/donations, enquiry research/support, digital corporate archive processing, divisional records management and conservation

4. Planning and Organising

- The overall programme of work is set by the line manager in consultation with the post-holder and regularly reviewed in meetings with the line manager, relevant colleagues and working groups to assess progress against set objectives and targets
- The work programme is also monitored via the divisional annual work plan
- Post-holder is required to plan the processes and co-ordination of project bids to strict deadlines, and develop detailed project plans working backwards from project deliverables

5. Problem Solving

- Balancing conflicting demands of concurrent projects through effective time management and managing expectations of stakeholders with the aid of line manager
- Over or under spend on project budgets by virement of budget headings or by negotiating increase/reduction in declared deliverables with funding agencies
- Co-ordinating and interpreting the input of academic partners to project bids through e.g. policies and procedures for use of digital imaging unit or explaining professional descriptive standards
6. Decision Making

- Recommending the appropriate level of general and technical content required for specific project proposals following review of funding agency/professional literature
- Recommending the point at which funding agencies and stakeholders should be advised of major changes to project plans
- Appropriate hierarchical levels of description and professional standards to be utilised

7. Key Contacts/Relationships

Line Manager, Deputy University Archivist, Director of University Collections, Digital Library Officers and most other curatorial level staff in Special Collections to aid the conception and overall management of projects. Colleagues in Digital Library Division, e.g. Metadata Co-ordinator for essential ITC support. Other IS units and other University staff such as finance officers, RIE, Development Office, academic project partners both in Edinburgh and beyond to ensure academic benefits and exploitation of project resources. Other information professionals and conservators in UK and international HEI’s and other organisations, professional associations, funders, plus commercial service suppliers.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job

- An honours degree and a professional qualification in archives management.
- Experience of working at a professional level in archives.
- A thorough understanding of current professional practice including practical experience of the full range of technical standards, formats, protocols etc. affecting archival description, (ISAD(G)2 EAD, XML) etc. and knowledge of preservation issues and standards, such as OAIS.
- Knowledge and awareness of relevant legislation affecting archives and associated issues.
- Track record of attracting external funding, project management workflow and delivery
- Tact, persuasiveness and assertiveness

9. Dimensions

- Manages subordinate project staff as required, e.g. project researchers, placements and student interns
- Holds front line responsibility for project budgets ranging typically from £10k - £80k
- Affects work of 6 curatorial Special Collections staff and large numbers of academics and students through project partnerships and development of resources.
- Works closely with highly prestigious, valuable and unique collections demanding highest levels of care and interpretation.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information

The Project Archivist post is underwritten from bequest finance but is expected to be largely self-financing, building on previous success by drawing in greater levels of funding and greatly increasing the overall accessibility of archival and manuscript collections.