

Museum or Art Gallery Curator

Museum or art gallery curators manage collections of historical, archaeological, artistic and scientific items. This includes identifying, interpreting and caring for all exhibits. They are also responsible for the day-to-day management of the museum or gallery and its staff.

The Work

You could be:

- selecting, borrowing and buying items or negotiating loan items
- designing and arranging displays and special exhibitions in an interesting way
- arranging to restore and conserve objects
- cataloguing collection items and ensuring records are maintained
- managing the museum or gallery budget
- organising publicity and fundraising
- giving talks and lectures to groups including school parties
- carrying out research on items and reporting or publishing the results
- supervising and training museum or gallery staff and volunteer groups.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Salaries for assistant museum or art gallery curators are around £18,000 to £23,000 a year. Curators' salaries can be up to £30,000 a year. Senior curators and principals can earn up to around £48,000 a year, depending on level of responsibility.

Conditions

- Museums and galleries vary greatly in size and type.
- You would usually work a 37-hour week with additional evening and weekend shifts.
- If you work in a large museum, you may only have the responsibility of looking after one collection.
- In smaller museums you may combine administration with some of the tasks listed above.
- You normally work in a warm, well-lit environment unless you work in an outdoor museum, perhaps with an industrial or farming theme, where you will sometimes have to be out in all weathers.
- In large cities you may be able to work in museums or galleries which specialise in subjects such as natural history or modern art. You would need to have specialist knowledge.

Getting In

- Entry is very competitive. You will need a good Honours degree in a suitable subject, and relevant work experience.
- Work experience is usually gained through volunteering or internships, work experience placements of varying length while you are an undergraduate or postgraduate student.
- Entry requirements may vary depending on the type of museum or gallery work you are interested in.
- Relevant degree subjects include anthropology, archaeology, art history, history, natural history or cultural studies of a particular country. There are a number of degree courses in museum, gallery or heritage studies available in England and Wales.
- Entry requirements for a degree are usually between 4-5 Highers. Specific subjects may be required for particular courses.
- Many employers prefer you to have a postgraduate qualification in museum and gallery studies. A wide range of postgraduate qualifications are available.
- In Scotland, the University of St Andrews offers postgraduate qualifications in Museum and Gallery Studies.
- The Universities of Aberdeen and Glasgow offer postgraduate qualifications in Museum Studies.
- Most entrants work first as assistant curators or keepers, often on a short term contract to begin with.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- a genuine interest in the subject
- the ability to study a subject in great depth
- excellent written and verbal communication skills
- an accurate approach
- practical skills
- creative flair and imagination
- IT and research skills
- organisational and business skills
- the ability to lead and motivate staff.

Training

- You would receive on the job training from senior staff or management covering for example, the collection's history, health and safety policy and security systems.
- For museum staff with appropriate qualifications, the Museums Association (MA) offers a programme of continuing professional development, leading to the Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA), which takes between 2-3 years to complete. Details are on the MA website.

Getting On

- With experience and further skills, you may be able to move around in either the public or private sector.
- The promotion structure in national museums is from assistant curator to curator and in large museums or galleries to department head and director or principal.
- Local authority museums do not all have a set promotion structure. You may be able to move from assistant curator to education officer, curator and possibly to museums officer.

- If you start in a small museum you may be able to move on to a larger one with better promotion prospects.
- You may be able to move into an academic post as a curator looking after a university's collections.
- It helps if you are willing to move around the country.

More Information

According to the Museums Galleries Scotland website, there are over 400 museums and galleries in Scotland. They vary in size from the National Museum of Scotland, with many employees, to small local museums and galleries.

Many museums and galleries offer curatorial internships, work experience placements and voluntary work placements for undergraduate and graduate students. Placements vary in length and may be full time or part time. International internships are also possible.

The Creative and Cultural Skills website has a careers section called [Creative Choices](#) which covers careers information, jobs and opportunities in the heritage and culture sector.

The following recruitment websites may be useful when looking for employment.

- [Creative Scotland Opportunities](#)
- [Myjobscotland](#) (Scottish Local Government Jobs Portal)
- [Museum Jobs](#).

Contacts

Creative Scotland

Tel: 0345 603 6000

Email: enquiries@creativescotland.com

Website: www.creativescotland.com

Website (2): opportunities.creativescotland.com

Twitter: @CreativeScots

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland

Historic Environment Scotland (HES)

Tel: 0131 668 8600

Website: www.historicenvironment.scot

Twitter: @HistEnvScot

Facebook: www.facebook.com/historicenvscotland

Museum Jobs: cultural sector recruitment

Website: www.museumjobs.com

Museums Association

Tel: 020 7566 7800

Email: info@museumsassociation.org

Website: www.museumsassociation.org/home

Twitter: @MuseumsAssoc

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MuseumsAssoc

Museums Galleries Scotland

Tel: 0131 550 4100

Email: admin@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk

Website: www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk

Twitter: @MuseumsGalScot

National Trust for Scotland (NTS)

Tel: 0131 458 0200

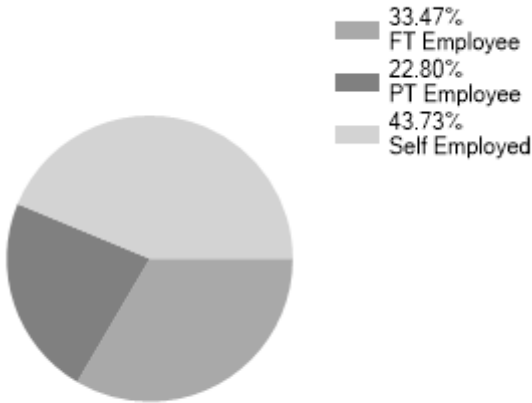
Website: www.nts.org.uk

Twitter: @N_T_S

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NationalTrustforScotland

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

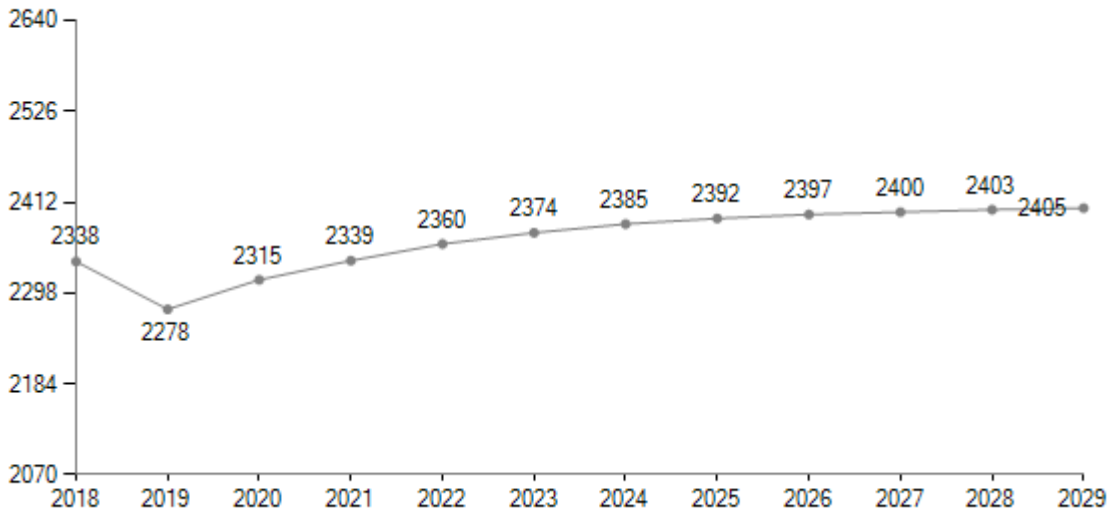


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)