

Director's Assistant

Job description

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Background

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Zarina Bhimji, Sophie Calle, Theaster Gates, Emily Jacir and Michael Rakowitz. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, a restaurant and a bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see. The Gallery is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter

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Role

The Director's Assistant is responsible for providing administrative and secretarial support for the Director in all aspects of her work and providing a professional and efficient interface with colleagues and high-level external stakeholders.

The Director's Assistant must ensure that information links are maintained between the Director and Senior Management, manage the Director's diary and travel arrangements, and administer the budget and files and records for the Director's office. In the absence of the Director, this post requires being a representative of the Gallery, and point of contact for special visitors, either in person or through correspondence. In addition, the Director's Assistant is responsible for collating Trustee meeting papers and managing aspects of Board governance. The role also supports special projects and consultancies; and periodically mentors a trainee in the post.

Accountability

The Director's Assistant is managed by the Director.

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Duties and Responsibilities

Administrative and secretarial support for the Director:

- Be the primary point of contact for all enquiries to the Director: Prioritise and track incoming correspondence and communications, providing excellent written and oral responses and confident professional liaison. Draft and prepare the Director's outgoing communications as required.
- Proactively manage the Director's diary, helping to ensure her time is appropriately and effectively used; ensure that the Director is prepared for all meetings (papers, briefing notes, directions, travel documents or other instructions).
- Plan and coordinate the Director's travel requirements (Flights, hotels, international transport and meeting/dinner coordination).
- Set an annual schedule of meetings including (but not limited to) Trustees, sub-committees, team meetings, team leader reviews and one-to-ones.
- Prepare reports, briefings and presentations for the Director on a wide range of issues and topics.
- Collate the quarterly report from across the organisation for Trustees' meetings; liaise with Trustees as required; oversee length of Board Members' terms of service.
- Establish and manage effective engagement and communications between the Director and multiple stakeholders including internal staff and teams, and external contacts, including, but not limited to Trustees and sector committees.
- Develop and maintain administrative systems and record-keeping for the Director's Office, including ensuring that the Director's cultivation list is maintained on the database in liaison with other Departments. Ensure accuracy and rigour and appropriate levels of confidentiality.
- Financial administration: monitoring budgets, managing the Director's expenses and credit card receipts.

Advocacy and diplomacy:

- Administration of the Director's office as the point of reference for principal public funders, and political and arts professional bodies.
- In the absence of the Director, be a representative of the Whitechapel either through correspondence or for special visitors in person.
- Support the Director through representation at internal and external events.
- Delivering and performing every aspect of the role with the highest regard to confidentiality and acting at all times with discretion.
- Contributing to staff welfare by supporting Christmas and summer parties.

Special projects / other:

- Working flexible hours to facilitate the requirements of the Director's schedule, including occasional evenings and weekends.
- Assisting the Director as required on specific projects, including but not limited to research projects relating to art, exhibitions and consultancies.
- Manage trainees in the Director's Office as required.
- Any other duty as deemed appropriate by the Director.

Person Specification

Essential

- Significant experience working in a challenging and busy office environment requiring excellent organisational and time management capability for yourself and others.
- Experience working as a PA or Executive Assistant for a busy Director or equivalent, and of working with high-level stakeholders.
- Experience in maintaining and monitoring complex diaries and travel arrangements, scheduling conflicts quickly, effectively and accurately, including full use of Outlook functionality.
- Excellent communication skills; a high standard of letter writing, telephone and other forms of written and verbal communication.
- Excellent administrative and organisational skills with close attention to detail.
- Ability to identify with the activities and policies of the Whitechapel Gallery in particular and cultural institutions in general.
- Knowledge of and interest in contemporary visual arts.
- An ability to handle a variety of assignments at any one time and to filter material to the appropriate persons.
- Must possess tact, confidence, and the maturity to liaise with a wide range of people.
- Must be IT literate and have experience in Microsoft Word/ Database/ Excel.
- A willingness to participate in out-of-hours events connected with the Gallery.
- Willingness to work flexible hours at short notice (compensated by time off in lieu)

Desirable

- Competent or fluent in speaking other languages.

Conditions of Work

- Contract – Permanent
- Hours of work: full-time, Monday to Friday, 9:30am – 5:45pm, with one hour for lunch
- Salary: c. £27,000 to £30,000 gross per annum, depending on experience
- The period of notice is two months in writing on either side
- Probationary period: 6 months
- Due to the nature of the job, some evening and weekend work will be required, as well as occasional travel. This will be compensated by time off in lieu.

In addition, the benefits you are eligible to receive are, subject to availability:

- 25 days annual leave, plus statutory bank holidays
- Eligibility to participate in the group personal pension scheme, with the Gallery contributing 5% of your gross annual salary
- Discount from the Gallery bookshop (subject to availability)
- Discount from the Townsend Restaurant (subject to availability)
- Discounts on editions (one per edition) and publications (subject to availability)
- Training opportunities
- £200 annual travel grant
- Free entry to a range of arts organisations across the UK
- Cycle to Work scheme