

UGA Special Collections Libraries Student Docent Program

Overview

In fall 2023, 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 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, September 15, 2023; In-person interviews for selected applicants will be scheduled from September 18 – September 25. Candidates selected for admission to the program will be notified by Friday, September 29, 2023.

Note: Applicants should be currently enrolled undergraduate students at the University of Georgia who can commit to participating in the program for one year (October 2023 – May 2024).

To apply, visit: t.uga.edu/9LC

Training Scope/Schedule

Training sessions will take place at the Special Collections Building on **Wednesdays from 3-5PM on the following dates: October 11, October 18, October 25, November 1, and November 8.**

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 five-week training period, concluding with a public tour in mid-November. If you must miss a session, you may bring your case to the attention of the Docent Coordinator for consideration. Once trained, student docents will be responsible for writing tour stops, leading tours, and assisting at events. For a full breakdown of requirements, see the below table:

2023 – 2024 Student Docent Requirements	
Weekly Training Sessions (10 hours)	Student docents will be available to attend 5 weekly training sessions throughout October and November.
End of Training Tour (2 hours)	Student docents will lead one public tour during the week of November 13 th ; times scheduled and advertised based on docent availability. Student docents will also observe at least one other docent tour.
Tour Stop Writing (8 hours)	Student docents will write and submit 1 tour stop in the fall, due December 8 th . Student docents will write and submit 1 tour stop in the spring, due date TBD.
Spring Monthly Student Docent Meetings (8 hours)	Students will attend monthly student docent meetings to continue training, share and practice tour content, and provide feedback for other student docents.
Spring Weekly Tours (4 hours)	Student docents will lead at least 4 tours during the Spring 2024 semester.
Spring Events (6 hours)	Student docents will work at least 2 events during the Spring 2024 semester.
8 th Grade Tours and Other School Trips (10 hours)	Student docents will lead tours in the galleries during at least 1 Experience UGA trip. (March 12, March 19, March 20, March 21, March 26, March 27, or March 28). Additionally, student docents will assist with at least one school trip tour during the academic year.
Desk Shifts (34 hours)	Student docents may choose to work the reading room desk in the Spring of 2024
82 total hours	A student may choose for the Student Docent Program to apply for an internship requirement and will work with Jan and Jess to include additional hours in their schedule to fulfill internship requirements.

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 five-week training, docents will then commit to working for the Special Collections Libraries through the Spring 2024 semester, spending 8-10 hours per month leading tours, assisting with events, 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?

At the start of training, all trainees will be given a tour script to memorize. Throughout training, participants will take quizzes on the tour content. 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, we will practice giving tours before each student docent leads a public tour in mid-November.

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; 1 public tour; plus additional time outside of classes to study your material and research and write one tour stop (due December 8th). In total, we anticipate you will volunteer approximately 20 hours of your time during this phase of the program.

Docents will be eligible to begin leading guided tours for the public in spring 2024. 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