



Assistant Archivist (Full-time)

Job description

Job reference: 0115/AA

Context

Black Cultural Archives (BCA) is a national institution dedicated to collecting, preserving and celebrating the histories of people of African descent in Britain.

BCA was established in 1981 as a grassroots community archive with a focus on the needs of a British population, with an international outlook enshrined in its objects:

' establish ... Black Cultural Archives Museum to stimulate awareness and understanding of the contribution of African peoples to British history and society and to collect and preserve literature ... any other record or account relating to the roots and history of Black peoples in Africa, the Caribbean, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Europe.'

The primary goal of the organisation was to improve the educational opportunities for Black children through the establishment of a resource and reference point for the Black community to record and study Black life and experiences, to reclaim the past, and uncover Black people's historical connections and heritage within Britain.

Today, through the archive collections, our ambition is to create a grander narrative on Black history, firmly locating the presence, contributions and experiences of Black people within the history and future of Britain. We strive to provide positive representations of Black people in culture, heritage and education, and to counter the negative, and lack of, Black representation in wider society.

We are seeking an Assistant Archivist who will work alongside the Collections Manager. You will help to provide the full range of archive and records management services to researchers, the general public and to members of staff across the organisation. You will assist in the care and management of the archives as well as handling enquiries and participating in the work of the wider organisation in line with agreed Collection objectives and the objectives of Black Cultural Archives as a whole.

About you

You will have a recognised qualification in archives with proven experience of working in an archive. Familiarity with the archives or museums sector is desirable but not essential.

You should be flexible, proactive and have excellent organisational and interpersonal skills and be able to demonstrate a sound problem solving approach to your work.

Key responsibilities

- Appraise the collection, including selection of items for preservation, disposal and conservation
- Catalogue incoming archive collections using Axiell Calm, updating existing records and describing the archives in line with ISAD(G) standards
- Sort, list and repackage archive collections using preservation materials
- Contribute to the delivery of public access to the collections (booking appointments, supervision of readers and production of documents)
- Record and maintain all enquiry and reading room statistics
- Respond to user enquiries about the collection and the work of Black Cultural Archives (via email, phone and in person)
- Deliver tours of the collections to stakeholders or groups on arranged visits
- Undertake outreach tasks including participating in public and private events, study sessions and educational activities as appropriate
- Contribute to the production and delivery of Black Cultural Archives exhibitions and events including researching the archive and those of other institutions and individuals to source relevant material for the exhibition and related learning activities
- To carry out research as directed by the Collections Manager and self-initiated to further internal knowledge and to help to grow the organisation's reputation as a knowledge based organisation with specific reference to the presence and contributions of people of African descent in Britain
- Contribute to the production of online resources and user guides for Black Cultural Archives' collections
- Train volunteers or interns in basic archive tasks including listing, repackaging, and digitisation
- Supervise and coordinate the work of volunteers

Other

- Attend and take minutes for the quarterly meetings of the Collections Management Advisory Group and Archive Acquisition Sub-committee
- Attend and contribute to all internal meetings as set out by the Management Team

- Support the Collections Manager to develop and implement and maintain the document management system across the organisation
- To provide reception cover or provide exhibition invigilation support as required

General

- Undertake any other duties as required

Person specification: key competencies

Essential

- Graduate qualification in Archives or Archives Management
- At least 1 years' experience of working in an archive or heritage environment
- Experience of handling archive material as part of ingestion, preservation and storage processes
- Experience of working in a public facing archival role
- An understanding of ISAD (G) standards when cataloguing archival material
- Proven research skills using both paper and electronic tools to communicate the results through written reports/information to meet the needs of a range of different audiences
- Excellent IT skills including proficiency with MS Office and professional archive catalogue software
- Excellent organisational and communication skills
- Demonstrable interest in Black cultural heritage
- An interest in community archives
- A willingness to undertake a variety of duties

Desirable

- Experience of training and supervising volunteers
- Experience of working with others and assisting with the development and delivery of public programmes for example workshops and talks
- Knowledge of copyright law and other legislation relating to the ownership and use of archive material
- Understanding of the aims and objectives of Black Cultural Archives

Details of the post

The assistant archivist will work closely with the learning managers, learning officer and marketing manager. They will supervise volunteers.

We are open to the public Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 6pm. We have late nights once a month when we open until 10pm (this is subject to change).

You will be expected to work some public holidays when time off in lieu will be given in return.

As a key member of staff, duties will vary and may also include assisting colleagues across the organisation.

Annual salary £22,443

Start date As soon as possible

The post is based at Black Cultural Archives, 1 Windrush Square, Brixton SW2 1EF

Recruitment timetable

Closing date 5.00pm Friday 20 March 2015

Interviews wc 30 March 2015

Please email your completed application form to reception@bcaheritage.org.uk including the job reference in the subject line

We do not accept applications via CV. No agencies

