

Online Work Experience



MODULE FOUR: Caring for Artefacts

Caring for Artefacts

Museums work hard to ensure that unique historic, natural and cultural objects survive so that generations into the future can continue to learn from them. This requires a specific set of skills: attention to detail and risks, thoroughness and patience.

Watch [this film](#) about the team at the Metropolitan Museum in New York working on a Michelangelo drawing from Oxford University's collection. It talks about the practical challenges of looking after a five hundred year old picture, and also the choices museum professionals had to make about its care.

The video playlist includes more examples of the practical skills required in caring for many other artefacts, large and small, at the Met – explore those that most interested you.

Caring for Artefacts

The other important task when managing a museum collection is to accurately categorise, describe and research each artefact so that they can easily be retrieved and understood.

This undertaking starts with a basic sorting of objects, which you can practice in [this primary school science game](#).

With significant artefacts, this task deepens to the examination and documentation of every detail to understand it better.

[This film](#) shows the detailed recording undertaken by the Natural History Museum on one of their dinosaur specimens.

[This research paper](#) describes how digital radiographic analysis has helped Museums Worcestershire better understand archaeological finds from the site of the City's old hospital (*note – the paper is a 39MB download, [here's a short summary](#) of the research if you prefer*).

Challenge

Museum and University archives across the world use crowd-sourcing to transcribe some of their documents online. This is real and often very challenging museum documentation that you can contribute to as part of your work experience.

Choose a project from the Zooniverse platform. DUNA from the Natural History Museum is a great example.

You can take part anonymously or by signing up as a user. The platform gives you instructions before you start on a project.

Work through the documentation tasks on a number of records – the more you can do, the more museum real work experience you achieve.

Take a screenshot as you work and save it for your work experience portfolio.