

New York State Department of Civil Service
DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION

Classification Standard

Occ. Code 3806100

Research and Collections Technician, Grade 14

Brief Description of Class

Research and Collections Technicians are technical support positions, requiring specialized education and training, which perform laboratory and fieldwork in the areas of biology, archaeology, history, geology or related fields related to the collections in the Research and Collections Division of the New York State Museum or to those held by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP).

Distinguishing Characteristics

Research and Collections Technician: full performance level; under the direction of collections managers or curators, incumbents perform work centered on the procurement, identification, documentation, care and management of scientific and historical specimens, objects and artifacts; create and maintain collections databases and metadata bases that expedite research, enable inventory control, and contribute to interrelated content creation and dissemination.

Most positions are in the State Museum and are in the non-competitive jurisdictional class. The positions in OPRHP are in the competitive jurisdictional class and work in the Bureau of Historic Sites, Collections Management Unit.

Related Classes

Curators analyze collections and themes related to historic sites and historic preservation efforts within the Division of Historic Preservation. Incumbents also work with other units within the Division on preservation of objects and buildings

Museum Scientists perform scientific research that typically is connected to the State Museum collections and/or to New York State and its larger global context. Incumbents write research papers that frequently result in published, peer-reviewed studies and otherwise disseminate the results of their research and share their knowledge. They curate assigned collections related to their areas of expertise, compete for grants from a variety of sources to fund their research and collections work, and take part in exhibit planning to ensure the accuracy of the exhibits.

Critical distinctions between Research & Collections Technicians and Museum Scientists are that the latter exercise increasing responsibility and independence in research, scope of research, supervisory, curatorial and administrative responsibilities. Research & Collections Technicians are not collections managers or curators; they perform their duties under the direction of collections managers and/or curators.

Museum Exhibit Specialists perform skilled work, requiring specialized training and experience related to the building and installation of exhibits at the State Museum. Incumbents provide services in areas such as audiovisual operations, exhibit fabrication, graphic design and imaging.

Illustrative Tasks

Research and Collections Technician

Under the general supervision of scientists and historians who serve as curators or collections managers of specific natural science, history and archaeology collections, Research and Collections Technicians in the State Museum:

- Assist in the organization of uncatalogued incoming collections so that they can be logically accessioned into the State Museum system and ensure that no information accompanying them is lost in the process.
- Assist in the creation of a detailed, artifact/object-level inventory of the collections to meet professional standards for museum collections.
- Participate on field teams procuring specimens and recording data such as field surveys and geologic mapping.
- Review and interpret field notes associated with incoming objects and artifacts to determine appropriate provenance.
- With guidance from collections managers or curators, provide identification, classification, and catalog-level description of all artifacts or objects using standardized classification protocols; assign catalog numbers to all artifacts/objects and link those numbers to catalog descriptions; assist with the training and supervision of volunteers, interns, and students supporting this process.
- Enter, edit and update object records for each artifact/object/specimen into the collections management databases, using established database protocols to ensure that all descriptive and inventory data are complete and accurate; verify and research information by reviewing pertinent documentation such as ledger entries, catalogue cards, accession records and published sources; may assist in training others to use these systems.

- Photograph and create digital images of selected artifacts/objects to meet professional standards for museum collections and to be consistent with established protocols for entry of items into the collections management database.
- Inspect collection storage areas for pests and environmental hazard conditions; monitor temperature and humidity; perform remedial action as directed or obtain appropriate corrective response from other Museum staff or outside vendors or consultants.
- Assist in cleaning of objects in storage and reorganize new acquisitions and objects in storage for optimum capacity; inventory old collections; re-house items when necessary; assist with the supervision of interns, students, and volunteers working on collections.
- Assist collections managers or curators as needed in moving newly acquired collections objects from the point of origin to the Museum's collections facilities, and in collecting or returning objects on in-coming or out-going loans; assist in exhibit installation and de-installation; prepare objects from the collection for packing for traveling for exhibitions or other loans.
- Provide access to secure storage areas for non-specialist staff, visitors, researchers, volunteers, and interns; may provide tours/ outreach centered on their roles in specific collection areas and/or curatorial practices.
- Under general supervision of higher-level museum staff including collections manager or curators, may perform data gathering for research projects, including primary and secondary source document searches, assisting with gathering of data on collections objects, and writing portions of manuals and/or reports.
- May spend a portion of time on independent research activities.
- May assist in exhibits by photographing and tracking items from the Museum's collections.

Under supervision of the Museum Registrar, Research and Collections Technicians in the OPRHP:

- Review incoming gifts or purchases; prepare acquisition, legal and other required paperwork.
- Create manual and electronic files.
- Record assets as State property so that items can be tracked and positively

identified as New York State (NYS) assets. Register incoming objects and assign asset numbers; input the physical description of collections or individual items; identify historical significance and associations that establish connection between historic object assets and a historic site property, its occupants, or its historical context; acquire, direct, or photograph objects to accurately record their physical appearance; and remove artifacts from OPRHPs collection.

- Prepare, update, manage and maintain accurate permanent records describing artistic and historic collections administered by New York's Bureau of Historic Sites.
- Evaluate collections' use (exhibit vs. storage, research & image requests by other scholars, loans, etc.), field information requests from internal and external clients, and provide intellectual and physical access to the collections, and facilitate new scholarship by assisting visiting researchers and fulfilling requests.
- Facilitate the development and implementation of exhibits and site furnishing plans by identifying collections pertinent to the subject and requirements for the exhibition or the furnishing of an interior, generating lists of collections meeting criteria defined for exhibition or furnishing plan, request and facilitate photography of collections needed to support exhibitions and furnished settings, and prepare, coordinate, and/or participate in the movement of collections to and from historic sites.
- Assist in conservation efforts by assisting in or preparing on-site and field surveys of historic and artistic objects, cleaning and packing artifacts, and participating in preventive preservation maintenance of collections in storage.
- Assist in the loan of collection objects by facilitating the identification, selection and preparation of objects for loan exhibitions; evaluating object handling, care, and security requirements during transit, preparing specifications for appropriate object transportation arrangements, and securing transit as specified.
- Perform various activities to ensure appropriate storage and the security of artifacts and other collections objects, including driving vehicle carrying such objects.
- Perform duties related to the oversight and protection of NYS rights of ownership and copyright.
- Deaccession artifacts in accordance with OPRHP policy.

Independence of Operation

Research and Collections Technicians independently prioritize, perform, and supervise laboratory and field activities in accordance with established parameters. They consult with collections managers, curators and scientists only when confronted with unusual problems or situations. Their work is observed when learning to perform advanced procedures or operate sophisticated and delicate equipment. They may work closely with scientists and curators to assist them in conducting research.

Supervision Exercised

Although supervision is not required for classification of Research and Collections Technicians, they frequently supervise student interns and volunteers in the field and in the laboratory. They assist in orienting and training other workers or students by demonstrating and explaining the work of the laboratory and answering questions about procedures and protocols.

Minimum Qualifications

Research and Collections Technician

Open Competitive and non-competitive: A bachelor's degree including or supplemented by 18 semester credit hours in archaeology, anthropology, history, in one of the natural sciences (e.g., biology, zoology, geology), or related fields AND one year of professional experience assisting in scientific or historical research in the field or in artifact/specimen care and maintenance in a laboratory or a museum.

Note: Classification Standards illustrate the nature, extent, and scope of duties and responsibilities of the classes they describe. Standards cannot and do not include all the work that might be appropriately performed by a class. The minimum qualifications above are those required for appointment at the time the Classification Standard was written. Please contact the Division of Staffing Services for current information on minimum requirements for appointment or examination.

Date: 7/2023

CM