

Morris Museum of Art Docent Program Policy Statement

INTRODUCTION

At the Morris Museum of Art (MMA), a docent is a volunteer who conducts tours and special programs for visitors. Due to their public visibility, docents also serve as representatives of the MMA to a wide variety of guests. At the MMA, docents are considered volunteer members of the museum's staff. The following policy and procedures are designed to ensure excellence and promote the best environment for visitors and staff alike.

AAM STANDARDS FOR MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

The American Association of Museum Volunteers (AAMV), a nationally affiliated organization of the American Association of Museums, has developed standards for museum volunteers. These standards state that a museum volunteer:

- Understands and supports the purpose, structure, and policies of the institution or organization
- Makes his or her special skills or experience available to the museum
- Conducts himself or herself in accordance with the standards of conduct and ethics of the museum
- Completes any orientation, training course, or continuing education required
- Endeavors to be flexible in accepting assignments; performs assigned responsibilities willingly and courteously to the best of his or her ability; accepts the guidance of his or her manager or supervisor
- Complies with the time and dress requirements of the museum
- Obeys all security and safety rules of the museum
- Respects the confidentiality of sensitive or proprietary information
- Provides timely notification to his or her supervisor of absence or resignation
- Serves as a goodwill ambassador for the museum to the community

MMA REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCENTS (See page 2 for details)

- Become a member of the MMA
- Commit to a regular volunteer schedule
- Commit to a minimum of two years of service to the museum
- Share in training and evaluation of self and peers
- Regularly check the on-line *Docent Handbook* for updates
- Keep track of volunteer service hours and session attendance using Volgistics
- Attend docent continuing education as required

MEMBERSHIP

The MMA requires all docents to be museum members. Docents may purchase the category of membership that best suits his or her needs. However, all docents are eligible to purchase membership in the "Teacher Category."

ADMISSION AND STATUS

Admission into the MMA docent program is open to those who possess the qualities necessary to become an effective docent. Applicants to the docent program must be eighteen years of age or older and willing to commit to a minimum of two years of volunteer service, which includes thirty-six tour hours per year. The MMA recruits docents without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, or disability.

All candidates must complete a volunteer application. The application assists the museum in ensuring that applicants are ready and able to accept the responsibility of serving as a docent and by best utilizing the unique skills and experience of each individual. The application package includes a character reference form, criminal record disclosure, and resume request. Museum staff will conduct an interview, at which time the training program and docent responsibilities will be discussed. Applicants will be notified of the results of their application following the completion of a criminal background check. The MMA reserves the right to refuse applicants that are deemed inappropriate for the docent program.

DOCENT AGREEMENT

Once an applicant has been accepted into the docent program, he or she must sign a docent agreement. The agreement form lists the docent service commitments and the benefits accorded by the museum. By signing this agreement, the docent agrees to uphold the standards, policies, and procedures outlined in this document and in the *Docent Handbook*. This agreement is renewed annually.

DOCENT STATUS

There are several categories of docent service based on years of experience and extent of volunteerism. Docent categories include docent-in-training, provisional docent, inactive docent, docent on leave, docent, and docent emeritus. Most service categories will be noted on docent name badges. The categories are described below.

Docent-in-Training

The category of docent-in-training applies to those individuals accepted into the docent training program according to the admission procedures outlined above. Candidates are accepted during the summer; new docent training begins in the fall. In addition to a general orientation, docents-in-training receive specialized training in specific tour programs. The training program is adjusted annually to reflect current tour needs. Demonstrations, practice under simulated conditions, structured feedback, and coaching are critical components of the training program. Docents-in-training are expected to attend all training sessions or to make alternative arrangements with the Curator of Education. Docents-in-training move to provisional docent status upon successful completion of the evaluation with a member of the education staff. Docents-in-training receive a total of eighteen service hours (or one half of the normal annual commitment) for successful completion of the docent training program.

Provisional Docent

Provisional docent status begins after satisfactory completion of the docent training program and tour evaluation. During this period, provisional docents attend continuing

education sessions and are expected to complete the remaining eighteen hours of the annual service commitment by July 31. Service hours may be earned in the following ways: at least nine hours must be earned by conducting tours or serving as roaming docents in the galleries, The remaining “non-tour hours” may be earned by providing tours, staffing the Guest Services Desk, attending approved lectures, volunteering at museum education events or programs, committee work, or other special projects approved by the Curator of Education.

Provisional docents move from the provisional status upon successful completion of the training program (eighteen hours of credit) and the remaining eighteen hours of annual commitment of at least thirty-six hours of service.

Docent

Docents are expected to attend a minimum of eight continuing education meetings, conduct independent study as required for tour preparation, and contribute a minimum of thirty-six service hours (or three hours per month) from August 1 through July 31 of each fiscal year. All docents are expected to find out what information was covered if a meeting is missed.

Service hours must include at least eighteen hours earned by conducting tours or serving as roaming docents in the galleries. The remaining “non-tour hours” may be earned by providing tours, staffing the Guest Services Desk, attending approved lectures, volunteering at museum education events or programs, committee work, or other special projects approved by the Curator of Education. Docents who are unable to attend meetings or give tours for a short period of time (between three weeks and six months) are expected to notify the education department.

By virtue of their experience and knowledge, docents might be asked to serve as coaches, mentors, tour captains, or instructors during the training program.

Docent on Leave

A docent (with the exception of provisional and emeritus categories) may request a leave of absence. A leave of absence is defined as *an absence from the museum for more than six consecutive months but less than one year*. This request must be made in writing to the Curator of Education. For shorter absences, please inform a member of the education staff as a courtesy. During this period, the docent will be considered on leave. Docents on leave continue to receive docent program correspondence from the museum for up to one year. After one year on leave status, the docent will be given the choice to resume the responsibilities of an active docent, or be placed on inactive status. Time spent as a docent on leave will not count towards emeritus status, and available benefits will be limited (see the DOCENT BENEFITS section).

Inactive Docent

A docent (with the exception of provisional and emeritus categories) will be placed on inactive status if he or she fails to meet their minimum docent commitment after one year of service, or if he or she is takes a leave of absence for longer than one year. Docents

will be contacted of this status change by the Curator of Education in writing. During this period, inactive docents will continue to receive docent program correspondence from the museum for up to one year. After one year on inactive status, the docent will be given the choice to resume the responsibilities of an active docent, or be removed from the program. Time spent as an inactive docent will not count towards emeritus status, and available benefits will be limited (see the DOCENT BENEFITS section).

Docent Emeritus

In recognition of long-term service, a docent in good standing who has met the annual required number of hours of volunteer service for least ten years may submit a written request for the status of docent emeritus. Emeritus status affords the docent limited benefits without requiring active service to the museum. Docent emeriti will continue to receive certain benefits of the docent program, including docent continuing education, free admission and store discount with a museum membership, and the opportunity to purchase two reduced-priced Gala tickets. Docent emeriti who fulfill thirty-six hours of service commitment will be eligible for additional benefits (see the DOCENT BENEFITS section). Occasionally docent emeriti may be asked to share their expertise with other docents, or mentor a docent-in-training.

DOCENT BENEFITS

The museum appreciates the volunteer services provided by the docents and offers the following benefits:

Docent-in-Training and Provisional Docent

- Professional orientation, training, and some resource materials
- Continuing education program
- A supportive climate where volunteers can perform and grow
- Use of the museum's third floor break room during office hours
- One copy of *The Southern Collection*
- Free admission to the museum with museum membership
- Six free guest passes per year (Provisional Docent only)
- Option to purchase a "Teacher Membership"
- A 15% discount in the museum store (regular merchandise) with museum membership

Docent

- Professional orientation, training, and some resource materials
- Continuing education program
- A supportive climate where volunteers can perform and grow
- Use of the museum's third floor break room during office hours
- Free admission to the museum with museum membership
- Six free guest passes per year
- Option to purchase a "Teacher Membership"
- A 15% discount in the museum store (regular merchandise) with museum membership
- Opportunity to purchase up to two discounted Gala tickets

- Opportunity to attend one daytime education-sponsored museum trip (available following the completion of one year of required service, August 1–July 31)

Inactive Docent

The benefits listed below are available for up to one year after being placed on inactive status:

- Professional orientation, training, and some resource materials
- Continuing education program
- A supportive climate where volunteers can perform and grow
- Use of the museum’s third floor break room during office hours
- Free admission to the museum with museum membership

Docent on Leave

The benefits listed below are available for up to one year after being placed on leave:

- Professional orientation, training, and some resource materials
- Continuing education program
- A supportive climate where volunteers can perform and grow
- Use of the museum’s third floor break room during office hours
- Free admission to the museum with museum membership

Docent Emeritus

- Professional orientation, training, and some resource materials
- Continuing education program
- A supportive climate where volunteers can perform and grow
- Use of the museum’s third floor break room during office hours
- Free admission to the museum with museum membership
- Six free guest passes per year
- Option to purchase a “Teacher Membership”
- A 15% discount in the museum store (regular merchandise) with museum membership
- Opportunity to purchase up to two discounted Gala tickets
- Emeritus docents who complete one year of tour commitment hours as required for regular docents are also eligible to attend one daytime education-sponsored museum trip (available following the completion of one year of required service, August 1–July 31)

DISMISSAL

If a docent is failing to meet his or her commitment or to abide by the museum’s policies and procedures, the Curator of Education will discuss the situation with the docent. Reasons for this discussion may include remaining on inactive status for longer than one year, missed tours, poor attendance, relaying inaccurate or overly subjective information to visitors, misrepresentation of the museum or its objectives, or placing visitors or artworks at risk. The docent will be provided with an opportunity to improve his or her performance. If the docent fails to improve, the Curator of Education reserves the right to

dismiss the docent under the terms of the Docent Agreement. A notice of dismissal will be fully discussed with the docent.

TOUR PROGRAM GOALS

Services provided by docents follow the guidelines set for all educational services at the MMA. That is, docent-led programs will:

- Employ a **discipline-based art education (DBAE)** approach, which incorporates aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and production
- Emphasize the exploration of a work of art from various perspectives, including that of the artist, the artist's culture, and other societal and personal influences on the creation of art
- Recognize and celebrate **diversity** in Southern society. Tour content and strategies should address diverse cultural and social value systems and differences in learning style
- Foster visitors' **creative and critical thinking skills**
- Consider the **needs of the individual learner**

TOUR PROCEDURES

Tour procedures are outlined in depth on each individual tour plan.

TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Participation in the new docent training program is restricted to those individuals who have been accepted as docents-in-training, or to those who have been given permission by the Curator of Education. Likewise, participation in the continuing education program is restricted to all other categories of docents. The admittance of guests, such as professional colleagues and other museum staff and volunteers, to specific sessions is at the discretion of the Curator of Education and the Director.

RECORD-KEEPING

All docents are responsible for maintaining accurate records of their service hours and personal information using Volgistics. Docents are responsible for signing in and out of the volunteer logbook for continuing education sessions and volunteer service. Hours will be calculated on a quarterly basis and reported to docents. These hours will also be available on Volgistics for docents to review in detail. Errors in reporting should be brought to the attention of the education staff. Updating personal information such as name or address change is the responsibility of the docent. Any changes in such information should be reported to the Volunteer and Guest Services Coordinator.

DRESS CODE

Attire appropriate to the event or group is expected of all volunteers. For men, collared shirts, slacks, and optional sports jackets are appropriate. For women, this may include dresses, skirts, skirted suits, pantsuits, dress pants, and blouses. T-shirts, jeans, shorts, and sundresses would be considered inappropriate. In all cases, please wear comfortable shoes.

NAME BADGES

A temporary name badge will be issued upon acceptance to the docent-in-training program. A permanent name badge will be issued upon completion of provisional service. New badges will be issued to docents as they change volunteer service categories. Name badges must be worn at all times when a docent is performing volunteer service in the museum. Name badges may be stored at the museum or kept by the docent. If a docent resigns or otherwise leaves the museum, the name badge must be returned to the education staff.

BREAK ROOM

Docents may use the museum break room during the regular work week (Monday through Friday). The break room is located on the third floor. Water, a refrigerator, microwave, and other supplies are provided for all staff, including volunteers. A soft drink machine is also available and is located in the break room. Staff and volunteers are responsible for the cleanliness of this room.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

It is the responsibility of the docent to remain informed about museum policies, procedures, upcoming events, and other information. General and current museum information is available to all docents on the MMA website at www.themorris.org.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES

At times, visitors pose detailed questions about the museum or its collection for which the docent does not have an answer. All such requests for information should be directed to the professional staff. Visitors should be directed to the reception desk where they will receive the business card of the appropriate staff person. It is not appropriate for docents to write to visitors, the media, museum members, or other museums without the explicit knowledge and approval of the Curator of Education or other senior staff person.

LIBRARY USE

Volunteers have access to the Center for the Study of Southern Art between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Weekday access outside of these hours may be obtained by appointment with the librarian. Docents should observe the library's basic policies and procedures, which are included in the *Docent Handbook*.

RECOGNITION

The museum values and recognizes the individual contributions made by its docents. In addition to providing benefits (outlined on pages 4 and 5), the museum recognizes:

- Provisional docents who have completed all requirements of the training program
- Docents who have met their annual service commitment
- Docents who have completed 'milestone' commitments, including five and ten years of service
- Docents who have made an outstanding contribution to the docent program, the education department, or the MMA

SERVICE REVIEW

All components of the museum's educational services are continuously evaluated. The intent of evaluation is to improve the quality of our educational programs. Docent cooperation is vital to achieving this goal. Evaluation is conducted in many ways:

- Docents-in-training and provisional docents are formally evaluated through tour reviews conducted by the education staff. The intent of this evaluation is to test the effectiveness of training and ensure that provisional docents are properly prepared to deliver tours and programs.
- Docents who have recently completed their provisional training will participate in a tour review conducted by an education department staff member or emeritus docent. This review consists of a self-evaluation, staff observation of docent service, and discussion.
- Education staff will tour the galleries with docents occasionally to assess the tour program. Information gathered is used to adjust the tour program and training.
- The docent program is evaluated by docents on an annual basis. Docents are encouraged to contact the Curator of Education if there is an immediate concern about the docent program.
- Teachers and other tour group coordinators are asked to evaluate tour programs by completing a written questionnaire.

A personnel file is maintained on each docent. The file contains annual agreements, original application form, records of volunteer service hours, tour reviews, correspondence, recognition, copies of tour evaluation forms, and so forth. These files are held confidentially by the education office. Docents may review their files by request.

RESIGNATION

If a docent chooses to resign from the MMA Docent program, he or she should submit the resignation in writing to the Curator of Education at least two weeks prior to their last day. Upon leaving the museum, docents should return their *Docent Handbook* and name badge.

SECURITY/SAFETY

The MMA aims to provide a safe work environment. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all staff, paid or volunteer, to assure the safety of the museum, its collection, visitors and other staff members. Safety guidelines are reviewed annually with all docents. Any questions concerning safety should be directed immediately to the Curator of Education.

Any accidents or injuries that may occur while participating in docent activities are to be reported immediately to the Volunteer and Guest Services Coordinator or to a senior museum staff person. Any breeches of museum security, by visitors or staff, or potential problems should be reported immediately to the Curator of Education or to security personnel on duty. No docent should ever put himself at risk or in danger.

The security of personal items is the responsibility of each staff member. The museum is not responsible for loss or damage of personal items.

NON-HARASSMENT POLICY

The MMA has a policy of zero tolerance for workplace harassment. It is the goal of MMA management to provide an environment free of any form of harassment regarding race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age or disability. This policy includes the prohibition of sexual harassment, both as to sexually-oriented requests or attention by or toward an employee, temporary employee, volunteer, vendor, guest, or visitor, and as to the working environment generally. Harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability is also prohibited.

MMA expects all volunteers to accomplish their work in a business-like manner. Therefore, unlawful discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited while volunteers are engaged in any MMA related activity, whether on MMA's premises or not. It is our policy to deal with violations of this policy quickly and severely.

This policy covers any unwelcome behavior or remarks of a sexual or otherwise objectionable nature, whether such unwelcome behavior or remarks involve physical contact, all forms of written or verbal communication, gestures, jokes, name-calling, slurs, obscene language, threats or the circulation of written or photographic materials. It is simply impermissible to engage in any behavior which offends co-workers because of the sexual, racial, ethnic, religious or otherwise objectionable nature of the behavior. Our policy against sexual harassment extends to sexually-oriented requests of a supervisor or co-worker and to our working environment generally.

This policy applies to all volunteers. This policy also applies to conduct toward and by employees, temporary employees, other volunteers, vendors, guests and visitors to MMA. Any violation of MMA's policy prohibiting unlawful discrimination or harassment is grounds for immediate termination of service.

If any employee, temporary employee, volunteer, vendor, guest, or visitor believes that the spoken, written or physical conduct of another employee, temporary employee, volunteer, vendor, guest, or visitor is in violation of this policy, the offended person should immediately report such conduct to his/her immediate supervisor. If the offended person is uncomfortable reporting the harassment to his/her immediate supervisor (whether because the supervisor is involved in the harassment, or for any reason whatsoever), the offended person must report the harassment to the Curator of Education or Director (in that order). If the offended person has good reason to believe that the complaint cannot or will not be resolved by any of these staff, the offended person should report the harassment to a member of the MMA Board of Trustees. To be clear, any person who believes he or she is a victim of harassment, including sexual harassment, has a duty to report this right away.

Any complaints or concerns about workplace harassment will be treated seriously and will be quickly investigated and resolved as deemed appropriate under the circumstances. MMA will treat all such reports as confidentially as possible, including only those persons with a need to know.

MMA will not retaliate in any way against any person for making a good faith report of conduct by others believed to be in violation of this policy. MMA also will not tolerate retaliation in any form by the alleged harasser. Any alleged harasser who violates this policy prohibiting retaliation will have his or her service at MMA terminated immediately.

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PREVENTION POLICY

MMA has a policy of zero tolerance for workplace violence. The service of any volunteer who threatens or engages in any violence in the workplace will be terminated immediately. No talk of violence or joking about violence will be tolerated.

"Violence" includes physically harming another, shoving, pushing, harassing, intimidating, coercing, brandishing weapons, and threatening or talking of engaging in those activities. It is the intent of this policy to ensure that everyone associated with MMA never feels threatened by the actions or conduct of any employees, trustees, directors, volunteers, visitors and vendors.

It is everyone's business to prevent violence in the workplace. Volunteers are encouraged to report any incident which may involve a violation of any of MMA's policies. Concerns may be presented to a supervisor, Curator of Education, or to the Director (in that order). All reports will be investigated and information will be kept as confidential as is practicable.

POLICY FOR A DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE WORKPLACE

MMA has a strict policy against the use of drugs and alcohol on MMA property and/or while on MMA business. Drugs or alcohol may not only affect job performance but may endanger the safety and health of all employees, volunteers, vendors, guests, or visitors. To guard against problems with drugs and alcohol, management reserves the right to take any and all steps necessary to investigate potential problems in this area. If inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol is suspected, termination of service may result.

On certain occasions, the volunteer may provide service at the MMA at times when alcohol is being served, such as exhibition opening receptions, Gala, and other public events. At these events, use of alcohol should never interfere with professional behavior or job performance. Excessive use is prohibited.