

Salary Guidelines 2022

Foreword

The Association for Historical and Fine Art Photographers (AHFAP) is an organisation for imaging professionals in the cultural heritage sector. We support photographers, image-makers, and image archivists by providing a platform to share experiences and benefit from mutual co-operation.

In 2017, the Museum Association published salary guidelines (<https://tinyurl.com/2p97tdye>) with the aim to *“support employers, funders and stakeholders to be brave and enlightened and to reflect and reward the hard-work, knowledge and enthusiasm of everyone that works in and with museums and galleries.”* Unfortunately, these guidelines did not cover imaging professionals.

In 2021, AHFAP therefore conducted a survey to understand current pay practices within the UK cultural heritage sector. Additionally, we reviewed salaries based on job advertisements published on our website and other job desks.

Just like the Museum Association, we are hopeful that these salary guidelines will prove a helpful resource to cultural heritage institutions looking to hire imaging professionals.

If you have any questions about this document or about recruiting imaging professionals in general, please don't hesitate to get in touch via chair@ahfap.org.uk.



Kira Zumkley

Chair, Association for Historical and Fine Art Photographers



Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines set out AHFAP's recommended ranges for salaries in the cultural heritage sector. They are based on research into pay levels in 2021 across various levels of seniority, and across cultural heritage institutions in the UK of different sizes, types and locations. The guidelines are intended as a practical resource for employers and employees in the cultural heritage sector when considering salaries for posts.

The salary ranges in this document should be viewed as a minimum acceptable rate for salaries in the cultural heritage sector. They should be used in combination with other sources of advice on pay in the sector, such as from the Museum Association Salary Guidelines from 2017.

Additionally, these guidelines can also be used as a tool to raise awareness of the issues surrounding pay in the cultural heritage sector, particularly for imaging positions, with a view to improving levels of pay within the sector over time.





Job Levels

The following job levels are loosely based on the job levels published in the Museum Association Salary Guidelines from 2017. Where necessary, they have been adapted to reflect the specific duties of imaging professionals in the cultural heritage sector.

As stated by the MA, “these job levels have been designed to map out a career progression structure. Inevitably there will always be exceptions and differing circumstances that should be taken into consideration when using the guidelines. For example, a person may have extra responsibilities such as managing large numbers of staff, caring for an important or large collection, specific expertise, or may work in an area with a significantly higher than-average cost of living.

The job levels should therefore be used as a guide only, with salaries adjusted to accommodate specific circumstances.”

Junior Level

Previous Experience

Minimal work experience

Professional Knowledge

Basic imaging and/or photography competence and knowledge

Management of Resources

No budget or people management responsibilities

Freedom to Act

Work is undertaken with the advice and guidance of more senior colleagues

Mid Level

Previous Experience

Demonstrable relevant work experience (likely two-three years)

Professional Knowledge

Advanced imaging and/or photography competence and knowledge

Management of Resources

Occasional people management responsibilities

Freedom to Act

Work is undertaken following procedures and/or standards, manager is referred to for guidance

Senior Level

Previous Experience

Substantial relevant work experience (likely six or more years)

Professional Knowledge

High level of professional imaging and/or photography competence and knowledge

Management of Resources

Supervisory responsibilities and likely to have some budget responsibilities

Freedom to Act

Freedom to set team and own work targets subject to meeting organisational objectives

Management

Previous Experience

Substantial relevant work experience (likely six or more years)

Professional Knowledge

High level of professional imaging/photography competence and knowledge

Management of Resources

Manage a significant number of staff, have financial responsibility of whole function

Freedom to Act

Acknowledged authority and ability to draw on extensive experience to develop policy and solve complex issues, proven leadership and organisational skills, significant involvement with the formation and implementation of new practices and policies

Understanding the pay ranges

Just like the salary guidelines created by the museum association, the pay ranges published in these guidelines were created by looking at typical or median salaries. The median is the middle value when all salaries are ranked in order of magnitude. This approach is more representative of actual salaries than the average because it relies less on exceptionally low or high salaries in the sample than the simple average or mean.

The salary ranges set out in this document show the range between the median lower quartile (the median of the lowest 25% of salaries) and median upper quartile (the median of the highest 25% of salaries).

The ranges do not, therefore, reflect the total salary range. Some institutions pay higher or lower salaries than those in the pay ranges published in these guidelines.



	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile	Example Roles
Junior Level	£19,521	£23,152	£26,428	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaging Services Assistant, National Library of Scotland £25,167 • Assistant Digitisation Photographer, The Postal Museum £26,000 • Trainee Photographer, Historic England £17,299 • Archive Digitisation Officer, Historic Environment Scotland £22,363 to £25,087
Mid Level	£25,073	£28,499	£32,698	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archive Photographer, Historic Environment Scotland £26,341 to £32,669 • Photographer, Royal Collection Trust £28,000 • Photographer, Horniman Museum and Gardens £28,400 • Photographer, Glasgow Museums £28,322 to £33,261
Senior Level	£30,486	£34,656	£39,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Photographer, Science Museum Group £36,250 • Senior Photographer, British Museum £30,557 • Lead Photographer, National Museums Scotland £29,141 to £31,689 • Senior Photographer, Victoria and Albert Museum £34,000 to £39,000
Management	£36,853	£41,637	£47,513	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitisation Programme Manager, National Library Scotland £39,052 • Head of Photography and Digitisation, Victoria and Albert Museum £39,546 to £47,534 • Group Photography Manager, Science Museum Group £41,000 • Head of Design and Photography, National Museum of Ireland £59,713

Freelance and casual work

There has always been a substantial number of photographers working freelance or taking on casual work in the cultural heritage sector. Unfortunately, we were unable to gather robust data relating to pay for this group of workers, but we see this as an area for future research.

We would like to point out that freelance rates should not be calculated by referring to the salaries in this guide. Freelancers incur additional costs such as insurance, equipment maintenance, etc. and do not have any paid annual leave or get paid sick leave.

A good place to get more information on how to commission freelance work in a fair, inclusive and transparent way is <https://fairmuseumjobs.org/resources/>

Volunteering

There has been substantial growth in recent years in the number of cultural heritage institutions using volunteers to carry out digitisation projects. Any organization hoping to use volunteers for this purpose should consult the Internships and Volunteering Manifesto (<https://tinyurl.com/3ehrmr7n>) published by Fair Museum Jobs before doing so.

For the avoidance of doubt, Fair Museum Jobs has developed guidelines for voluntary roles taken directly from Paragraph 4 of Manifesto. Crucially for digitisation projects it states that “*voluntary positions should not ask for minimum qualifications or prior experience of specialist technical knowledge*” (e.g the use of a DSLR or scanner). Furthermore, “*voluntary positions must not be used to replace roles which were previously paid, or which carry duties and responsibilities one would normally expect from a paid role.*”

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Images courtesy of the Trustees of the Science Museum Group and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.