

Natural History Collections Curator Interview Questions

1. Walk me through how you plan and organize the acquisition, storage, and exhibition of collections and related materials, including the selection of exhibition themes and designs, and develop or install exhibit materials.

2. What kind of expertise do you have planning and conducting special research projects in area of interest or expertise?

3. What is the most challenging part of studying, examining, and testing acquisitions to authenticate their origin, composition, history, and to assess their current value?

4. Tell me the last time you had to write and review grant proposals, journal articles, institutional reports, and publicity materials. Share an example.

5. What is the key to success when communicating with the public.

6. Share an experience you had in dealing with a difficult person and how you handled the situation.

7. Share an experience in which you successfully shared a difficult piece of information. (Make sure that the candidate has open lines of communication.)

8. Tell me how you organize, plan, and prioritize your work.

9. What are some long-range objectives that you developed in your last job? What did you do to achieve them?

10. Give me an example of when you thought outside of the box. How did it help your employer?

11. Share an effective approach to working with a large amount of information/data. How has your approach affected your company?

12. Please share an experience in which you presented to a group. What was the situation and how did it go?

13. How would you rate your writing skills? (Ask for an example that demonstrates great writing skills.)

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14. Provide an example of a time when you were able to demonstrate excellent listening skills. What was the situation and outcome?

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15. Provide an example when your ethics were tested.

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16. Share an experience in which your attention to detail and thoroughness had an impact on your last company.

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17. Provide an experience that demonstrates your ability to manage time effectively. What were the challenges and results?

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18. Share what methods you use to negotiate and authorize purchase, sale, exchange, or loan of collections.

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19. Name a time where you developed and maintained an institution's registration, cataloging, and basic recordkeeping systems, using computer databases. Name a system you used.

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20. What is the most challenging part of train and supervising curatorial, fiscal, technical, research, and clerical staff, as well as volunteers or interns?

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21. Share an effective approach to confer with the board of directors to formulate and interpret policies, to determine budget requirements, and to plan overall operations.

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22. What have you found to be the best way to monitor the performance of your work and/or the work of others? Share a time when you had to take corrective action.

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23. Share an example of when you went above and beyond the "call of duty". (Look for answers that show the candidate is dependable.)

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24. Provide an example of a time when you successfully organized a diverse group of people to accomplish a task.

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25. Provide a time when you worked in a rapidly evolving workplace. How did you deal with the change? (Make sure the candidate is flexible.)

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26. Please share with me an example of how you helped coach or mentor someone. What improvements did you see in the person's knowledge or skills?

27. Share a time when you willingly took on additional responsibilities or challenges. How did you successfully meet all of the demands of these responsibilities? (Make sure the candidate is a self-starter and can demonstrate some initiative.)

28. Would you consider analyzing data or information a strength? How so?

29. Provide a time when you were able to identify a complex problem, evaluate the options, and implement a solution. How did the solution benefit your employer?

30. Provide an example of when you were persistent in the face of obstacles.

31. Describe an experience in which you identified the educational needs of your students and successfully developed a way to teach/train them.

32. What have you found to be the best way to inspect premises to assess the need for repairs and to ensure that climate and pest-control issues are addressed?

33. Describe an experience where you designed, organized, or conducted tours, workshops, and instructional or educational sessions to acquaint individuals with an institution's facilities and materials.

34. Provide a time when you dealt calmly and effectively with a high-stress situation.

35. In your experience, what is the key to developing a good team? (Look for how they build mutual trust, respect, and cooperation.)

36. Tell me about the last time you oversaw the work of someone else. How did you effectively motivate, develop, and direct the worker(s)?

37. Name a time when your patience was tested. How did you keep your emotions in check?

38. What is the key to a successful budget?

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39. Provide an experience in which you were sensitive to someone's needs or feelings. How did your helpfulness affect your work environment?

40. Please share an experience in which you successfully taught a difficult principle or concept. How were you able to be successful?

41. Describe an experience in which your ability to work well with others and reconcile differences helped your company or employer. (Make sure the candidate knows how to negotiate.)

42. Share an experience in which you used new training skills, ideas, or a method to adapt to a new situation or improve an ongoing one. (Look for the candidate's ability to learn.)

43. Share an experience in which personal connections to coworkers or others helped you to be successful in your work. (Make sure candidate works well with others.)