

Queen's University Library Position Guide

Position Title: Conservator (Archivist)

Unit: Queen's University Archives and W.D. Jordan Rare Books and Special Collections

Term: Limited-Term appointment (up to 12 months)

Rank: General Archivist

Date: July 2023

Description

Located at Queen's University in Kingston, the Conservator reports to the University Archivist & Associate University Librarian. The Conservator is a Limited-Term position that collaborates regularly with a team of archivists, librarians, and staff in the library's Archives and Special Collections division (Queen's University Archives and W. D. Jordan Rare Books and Special Collections, Maps, and Government Information). The position also collaborates with the whole library system in the context of the library's organizational design and vision of one library with a shared allegiance to common goals and a 'learning organization' philosophy of continuous staff development, engagement, teamwork and communication.

The Conservator plays a role in supporting the library's fundamental value of information access, stewardship and preservation, on a global scale for local needs, as well as the principle of enhancing learning and research through improved accessibility, presentation, and preservation.

The Conservator will sustain the preservation and conservation program for Archives and Special Collections focusing on addressing the inherent and ongoing needs in the substantial, significant, rare, and unique collections, while providing advisory services to the library system. In addition, the Conservator carries out treatment procedures for the conservation and preservation of archival and library material, particularly paper and rare book conservation, employing specialized techniques to restore, repair and conserve such items.

Summary of Duties

- Assesses and documents the materials and condition of objects, including using written descriptions, photographic recording, and instrumental analysis.
- Proposes interventive conservation treatment where appropriate. Consults with appropriate Archivist or Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections and obtains authorization for specific conservation treatments from them, as appropriate to their priorities and the needs of the item(s).
- Determines, designs, and carries out approved interventive conservation treatments. Documents such treatments.
- Adheres to the ethical standards of conservation practice as outlined in the *Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice* of the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators and the Canadian Association for Cultural Property.
- Determines and provides guidance regarding preventive conservation and preservation measures, including issues relating to access, handling, housing, storage, environmental control, mould and pest control, object installation and de-installation, exhibition, packing, and transit.

- Determines and carries out (or commissions) research on the materials of objects and on conservation treatment processes. Communicates the results of such research orally or/and in published form, where applicable.
- Develops and provides training and information for a wide variety of conservation students, junior conservation staff, other staff, clients and members of the public regarding the practice of conservation and the materials and nature of objects.
- Supervises all activities of the Conservation Technician and Conservation Interns;
- Provides guidance and specific instruction to a variety of staff involved in acquiring, storing, housing, displaying, and transporting objects; and to those charged with designing and maintaining building environmental controls.
- Oversees the operations and maintenance of the conservation workplaces, including the observance of health and safety standards.
- Supports emergency preparedness planning and response, in collaboration with other staff (faculty unit heads, library and central facilities staff, etc.).
- Specializes in book and paper; also, able to work with image, audio-visual, and multiple media.

Qualifications

Required

- Master's degree or Graduate Diploma in conservation, and a minimum of 1-2 years of relevant experience; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Demonstrated knowledge of current conservation principles and practices, materials science, the history of bookbinding and a demonstrated commitment to life-long learning.
- Demonstrated ability to perform high quality conservation treatments, primarily books and paper, and to communicate effectively about treatment options and decisions.
- Demonstrated project management skills; energy, flexibility, creativity; and excellent interpersonal, organizational and communication skills.
- Knowledge of emergency preparedness and emergency response procedures.
- Physical ability to conduct conservation work (excellent hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity; ability to work standing up for many hours, work light machinery such as a board shear, lift and carry moderate weight, wear protective equipment when necessary).

Preferred

- Demonstrated ability to perform high quality conservation treatments on formats, such as photographs, leather/vellum, audiovisual media, ephemera, and/or three-dimensional objects would be an asset.
- Experience in an academic environment with a variety of staff and faculty would be an asset.
- Record of professional engagement and contribution, such as research, publication, and involvement in pertinent professional and scholarly organizations would be an asset.
- Knowledge of preservation issues in different types of cultural institutions would be an asset.
- Experience with emerging technologies in conservation practice would be an asset.