

LIBRARY JOB FAMILY INTRODUCTION TO CURATORIAL MATRIX

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The curatorial “job family” is the only one that is defined by the types of materials that the curators care for, rather than by the functions they perform. In fact, most curators perform several, and many curators virtually all, necessary functions, especially those who work in very small repositories or in small special collections departments of larger institutions. Additionally, some curators of manuscripts, photos, or archives are attached to museums rather than to libraries, so the curatorial “job family” may include “tubs” otherwise unconnected to HUL. The title “curator” has a variety of meanings in the university’s libraries and special collections repositories, but the primary or exclusive functions common to virtually all the positions designated by this word are the development and administration of collections of primary research materials, some of which may be printed (e.g., rare books) and some, such as maps, represented in both manuscript and printed formats.

The most significant characteristic of the materials cared for is that most of them are unique. These are primary source materials, on which good scholarly research is ultimately based. Although housed in libraries, they may include drawings and plans, works of art, realia, memorabilia and scientific specimens, as well as printed materials, manuscripts (ranging from personal or family papers to institutional or data archives), photographs, slides, audio-visual materials (including audiotapes, motion picture film), and electronic records. These collections constitute primary resources, largely unpublished, which are used by members of a broad, international research community, as well as by the faculty, students and staff of Harvard University.

Several characteristics distinguish these primary source materials from most library holdings: *uniqueness* of most items; considerable *commercial value* of many individual items or of entire collections; *sensitive content* of many documents, especially recent ones; *fragility* of many items or entire collections (which together with the fact of uniqueness calls for extra-special care); and the fact that curators think and work in terms of *collections* rather than discrete items.

These characteristics all have implications for the work of curators. The following are the most striking implications:

Acquisitions. Uniqueness, monetary value, and sensitive content all affect negotiations and ongoing relations with donors. A unique collection can be in only one place, so acceptance or refusal usually has far-reaching implications. Monetary value may require that the curator arranges an appraisal for tax purposes, and sensitive content, that the curator and the donor work out restrictions on access; these may involve the privacy of third parties, or the confidentiality of government or organizational records. Fragility is a factor in acquisitions decisions. Thinking in terms of collections (or thinking archivally) means that curators are concerned with the whole story of the creator of the collection and with the full context of the person or group’s lives and activities, thus acquiring as complete a documentation

as possible. Curators may also select and develop collections of secondary materials (most notably books and relevant periodical publications) related to the collections of primary materials

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Processing. This means taking a few, a dozen, hundreds, or thousands of physically separate but intellectually and historically related items and

- 1) surveying the entire collection;
- 2) arranging the materials in an order that both reflects their history and makes sense to the user; another aspect of arrangement is physical care, so that materials are intact and in contact only with non-damaging containers;
- 3) throughout 1) and 2), appraising the materials for research value, weeding out duplicates and irrelevant items; and
- 4) describing the collection in a way that does justice to it as a whole and to all the persons, groups, and topics represented (as authors, or as recipients or subjects of letters or other documents). Sensitive, fragile and particularly expensive items may need to be housed and described separately. Resulting descriptions usually consist of a finding aid (or inventory or register), comparable to the front matter and table of contents of a book (but much more detailed), and a MARC cataloging record. Technologies new in the late '90s enable, and require, curators or their staffs to encode finding aids for electronic dissemination.

Preservation. Depending on curators' judgment of research and other values (commercial, aesthetic), they may authorize or contract for applied treatment or, more commonly, reformatting: photo-or audio-visual copying, microfilming (in-house or commercial), or digitizing. (See also #2 under "Processing").

Reference. Even experienced researchers may be new to archival research and so may need to be led through their initial forays. Uniqueness and the other characteristics enumerated above mean more stringent rules for users; enforcing them sometimes requires diplomacy and firmness in the face of resistance. Curators can advise on complex research projects, especially for collections they have processed. They must also become familiar with copyright law.

Outreach. Unique, expensive, and/or fragile materials must be handled with particular care when exhibited, and even more so when loaned to other institutions for exhibition there, when copyright must be taken into account and insurance and appropriate shipping must be negotiated. Explaining one's holdings and work in talks to relevant donor or user groups is challenging, as are tours; one wishes to make the repository and the holdings attractive to users and potential donors but not to thieves.

Management. Curators often participate in fundraising, especially for the care or

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reformatting of specific collections, and very occasionally for an acquisition. This may entail speaking with donor or writing grant proposals. General management functions vary, depending on the size of the repository and available staff (see below).

Professional involvement. Curators generally belong to the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of ALA or to organizations other than the ALA and its regional affiliates: e.g., the Society of American Archivists, New England Archivists, or the Manuscript Society. They may also belong to organizations defined by academic discipline (e.g., Modern Language Association, American Historical Association).

It is important to note that many curators, in charge of holdings with significant intellectual, historical, aesthetic, and/or monetary value, work in settings that do not reflect these values. Repositories are typically understaffed, and many employ only a curator. This situation also gives rise to the multi-faceted character of many curatorial positions.

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
56	Curatorial Associate	MLS or equivalent 2 years' experience Preferred: MA History/Archives MLS to include archival concentration 2 years archival work in a recognized repository	<p><i>Acquisitions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May assist in field work <p><i>Processing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes small or less complex collections independently, including the development of the collection arrangement, description and the MARC record • Assists with larger and more complex collections • May automate finding aids <p><i>Preservation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies preservation methods in daily work • Assists in disaster responses <p><i>Reference</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises researchers in person, by mail, telephone, e-mail, and fax on collections, with special emphasis on collections processed • May provide information from collections in response to user requests <p><i>Outreach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives tours and makes presentations • May provide items for exhibits, especially from collections processed • Represents repository at regional or national meetings related to repository's subject or professional fields <p><i>Planning and Administration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May contribute information for grant proposals through research and data compilation • May suggest new subject areas for collection development • Contributes actively to department's evaluations and improvement of policy and procedures

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
56 (cont.)			<p><i>Planning and Administration (cont.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes potential problems that may arise from working with unpublished collections in areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership • Supervises support staff, typically providing on the job training

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
57	Curator of Manuscripts and Archives Assistant Curator of Manuscripts Librarian [Archivist]	MLS or equivalent 2nd specialized advanced degree may be preferred (JD, MS, JD, MBA, etc.) 2-4 years experience Preferred: MA History/Archives MLS to include archival concentration 4 years relevant work in a recognized repository	<p>Acquisitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys, appraises and may select collections for possible acquisition • Provides donors with information on terms of donated collections • May advise potential donors of suitable alternative repository, on basis of professional knowledge and contacts • May develop supporting/complementary collections or collections of secondary resources when appropriate <p>Processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes larger collections, including the development of the finding aid and cataloging using recognized international formats and standards • May serve as leader for team processing <p>Preservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies preservation methods in daily work • May monitor environmental conditions of storage and work spaces, and make recommendations for improvements • Responsible for developing and updating disaster plan. May coordinate responses to disasters <p>Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides complex reference services which may include research instruction and online information, generally requiring knowledge of archives and manuscripts at Harvard, Radcliffe and elsewhere, and subject or foreign language expertise • Interviews users and assesses their information needs, and advises them about relevant collections onsite and elsewhere <p>Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May give tours and basic instruction in use of the repository • May select repository materials on the basis of subject relatedness or audience for classroom presentations and exhibitions

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
(cont.)			<p><i>Outreach (cont.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May approve and make arrangements for loaning repository items to external organizations for exhibit, including the negotiation of terms of the loan ● Represents repository at regional or national meetings related to repository's subject or professional fields <p><i>Planning and Administration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify potential grant opportunities and develop proposal and/or contribute information or proposal ideas for grant development ● Initiate evaluation and improvement of policies and procedures ● Awareness, understanding and recognition of legal issues resulting from working with unpublished collections concerning areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership ● Recognizes potential problems that may arise from working with unpublished collections in areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership ● May supervise professional staff. Hires, trains, coaches, evaluates and recommends promotion and termination for support staff

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58	Curator of Manuscripts	MLS or equivalent 2nd master's preferred 2-6 years' experience Preferred: MA History/Archives MLS to include archival concentration 6+ years of archival work in recognized repository	<p>Acquisitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May develop supporting/complementary collections or collections of secondary resources when appropriate • Surveys, appraises and selects (consulting on major acquisitions) collections for possible acquisition • Negotiates terms of use and answers donors' questions • Establishes and continues relationships, maintaining contact with donors. • May advise donors on suitable alternative repositories, on the basis of professional knowledge and contacts <p>Processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and oversees processing • Edits finding aids • Advises staff on collection management preservation strategies and cataloging to meet national standards <p>Preservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses and monitors preservation needs, including plans and recommendations for reformatting • Assesses and monitors preservation and security needs; updates policies and preservation strategies <p>Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews and develops reference service and policy • Provides complex reference services, which may include research instruction and online information, generally requiring knowledge of archives and manuscripts at Harvard, Radcliffe and elsewhere, and subject or foreign language expertise • Interviews users and assesses information needs, and advises them about relevant collections onsite or elsewhere • Teaches and lectures on subject matter related to repository collection or practice, to classes, organizations, groups, etc

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
(cont.)			<p><i>Outreach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approves loans of items to external organizations for exhibition, which may include negotiation of terms of the loan ● Develops, may write and arrange for publication of books, articles, bibliographies, etc., related to the repository's collections or subject fields ● Conceives and develops exhibitions, including selection of materials, design of exhibit, preparation of related publications, etc ● Represents repository at regional or national meetings related to repository's subject or professional fields <p><i>Planning and Administration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifies potential grant opportunities and develops proposals ● Initiates, evaluates and improves repository-wide policies and procedures, including special issues that result from working with unpublished collections in areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, "right-to-know" and ownership ● Awareness, understanding and recognition of legal issues resulting from working with unpublished collections concerning areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership ● Recognizes potential problems that may arise from working with unpublished collections in areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership ● Supervises professional staff; may indirectly or directly supervise support staff. Has final decision in hiring and terminating processes for support staff.

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
59	Director of Historical Collections Associate Curator Curator of Manuscripts	MLS or equivalent 2nd master's or doctorate preferred 4-6 years' supervisory experience Preferred: MA History/Archives MLS to include archival concentration 10 years of archival work in recognized repository <i>Typical Requirements:</i> Evidence of professionalism and/or scholarly activity	<p>Acquisitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responsibility, final oversight and authority for collection acquisitions and selection on basis of professional knowledge and contacts ● Initiates contact and discussion with potential donors and oversees acquisitions process. Solicits significant collections from major donors ● Develops and maintains relations with donors ● Oversees terms and has signature authority over donor agreements ● May advise donors on suitable alternative repositories <p>Processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plans and oversees processing. May edit finding aids. Advises staff on collection arrangement, preservation strategies and cataloging to meet national standards ● May advise staff on particular subject areas or physical arrangement for collections with special formats <p>Preservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assesses and monitors preservation needs and may initiate plans and recommendations for reformatting or other preservation solutions ● Assesses and monitors preservation and security needs; oversees updating of policies and preservation strategies ● May lobby for university-wide preservation efforts ● Obtains and allocates adequate funding to ensure long-term physical preservation of the collections <p>Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishes collegial relations with faculty and staff to encourage use of repository collections for curriculum development ● May act as primary liaison with researchers undertaking complex or highly specialized projects; or with researchers working in collections with particular conditions and restrictions on use ●

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59 (cont.)			<p><i>Reference (cont.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May provide informed recommendations for or assessments of applications for scholarly grant funding submitted by individuals or institutions ● Assess reference services -- in terms both of staff performance and the adequacy of reference resources; including planning for innovative reference services (on-line indices; site-specific networks; HGML or SGML technology applications) <p><i>Outreach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publicizes research resources through lectures/oral presentations to the research and professional community and through publications, whether broad-based surveys of repository holdings or analyses of individual collections ● Conceives and develops exhibitions, including selection of materials, design of exhibit, preparation of related publications, etc. ● May also solicit funding for exhibitions and administer arrangements for traveling exhibitions. Reciprocally, oversees loans of repository holdings to other institutions for exhibition ● Develops fund-raising strategies and events; directs activities of repository "Friends" groups; maintains and expands donor group ● Represents repository at regional or national meetings related to repository's subject or professional fields <p><i>Planning and Administration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifies potential grant opportunities and develops proposals ● Approves changes in repository-wide policies and procedures, and may interpret changes to relevant constituents ● Awareness, understanding and recognition of legal issues resulting from working with unpublished collections concerning areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
59 (cont.)			<p><i>Planning and Administration (cont.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognizes potential problems that may arise from working with unpublished collections in areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership ● Supervises staff at many levels; leads and motivates staff to accomplish department goals ● May coordinate or cooperate, at higher administrative levels, within or outside the university, cooperative inter-library/repository projects focused on common archival/special collections issues or activities ● May serve as institutional or repository representative on special committees or task forces organized by professional associations ● Oversees publishing ventures based on repository holdings, paper products (calendars, notecards, posters), reproductions of objects, audiovisuals, etc.

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
60	Curator of HCL Archives Director of Schlesinger Library	MLS or equivalent 3rd master's or doctorate preferred 6-10 years' management experience Preferred: MA History/Archives MLS to include archival concentration 12 years of archival work in a recognized repository <i>Typical Requirements:</i> Evidence of professional and/or scholarly activity	<p>Acquisitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiates contact and discussion with potential donors and oversees acquisitions process ● Signs deed of gift ● Oversees terms and has signature authority over donor agreements ● May advise donors on suitable alternative repositories, on the basis of professional knowledge and contacts ● Long-range planning and development of repository policies regarding both the substance and thrust of collection development and the mechanics of the acquisitions process <p>Preservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fiscal responsibility ● Assesses and monitors preservation needs, including plans and recommendations for reformatting ● Assesses and monitors preservation and security needs; oversees updating of policies and preservation strategies ● Serves as designated spokesperson in cases of disasters, theft, or major acquisition ● May lobby for university-wide preservation efforts ● Manages complex or sensitive personnel or security-related issues <p>Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refers queries to appropriate staff ● May teach courses related to repository holdings ● Establishes collegial relations with faculty and staff to encourage the use of repository collections for curriculum enrichment.

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<i>Level</i>	<i>Function/ Roles</i>	<i>Experience/Scope Minimum Required</i>	<i>Common Activities</i>
60 (cont.)			<p><i>Outreach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops fund-raising strategies and events; directs activities of repository "Friends" groups; maintains and expands donor group ● Represents repository at regional or national meetings related to repository's subject or professional fields <p><i>Planning and Administration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifies potential grant opportunities and develops proposals ● Establishes contact among library/archives funding sources ● Approves changes in repository-wide policies and procedures ● Has comprehensive authority/responsibility for the administration of a large archival or special collections repository ● Responsibilities include the broadest oversight of fiscal planning, personnel management and development, collections acquisition, processing and preservation, and the development and maintenance of the role of the repository in the research ● Awareness, understanding and recognition of legal issues resulting from working with unpublished collections concerning areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership ● Recognizes potential problems that may arise from working with unpublished collections in areas such as copyright, privacy, confidentiality, right-to-know, and ownership ● Acts as repository and institutional representative at the university and within the professional and research communities ● Develops, refines and approves policies at the highest professional level within the university. May perform a similar function in regional or national professional associations ● Demonstrates, through teaching, research or publication, a recognized level of professional and subject-specialty expertise.

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