



# Job Description

**Title:** Curatorial Assistant, Defra Lichens x 2  
**Contract:** Fixed term to 31 March 2025  
**Salary:** £28,346 per annum

## About Us

**We are a world-class visitor attraction and leading science research centre. We use the Museum's unique collections and our unrivalled expertise to tackle the biggest challenges facing the world today. We care for more than 80 million objects spanning billions of years and welcome more than five million visitors annually and 16 million visits to our website.**

Today the Museum is more relevant and influential than ever. By attracting people from a range of backgrounds to work for us, we can continue to look at the world with fresh eyes and find new ways of doing things.

We employ 900 staff in a variety of roles, all united by our vision of a future where people and planet thrive. We need everyone to have the passion and drive to help us with our mission to create advocates for our planet and inspire millions to care about the natural world.

This is an exciting time to join the Museum as we have secured investment from the UK Government to build a new science and digitisation centre at Thames Valley Science Park, University of Reading. The purpose-built centre will house much of the Museum's collection and will include laboratories, digitisation suites, collaborative research spaces, conservation labs and workspaces.

## Diversity and inclusion matter to us.

Our vision is of a future where both people and the planet thrive. Diversity is one of our core values and we strive to build a workplace where everyone feels a sense of belonging. All new staff who join us learn about the importance of diversity and inclusion to the Museum and how to contribute to creating an inclusive environment.

We know we have more to do, but we are committed to ensuring that everyone who works at the Museum feels they can thrive and feel valued and respected.



## Job Summary

Despite their importance, fungi have been historically under-researched compared with plants and animals. Of an estimated 2.5 million fungal species, only 300,000 have been identified and named. DNA-based identification has the potential to plug this gap.

The Natural History Museum's Lichen Collection is one of the world's largest collections of lichenised fungi with over 400,000 specimens including around 7,000 types. As part of a wider DEFRA-funded fungal genomics project in collaboration with Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the NHM will be sequencing the whole genome of at least 1,200 of its lichen type specimens to bring about a paradigm shift in the way lichenised fungi are identified and understood.

The Curatorial Assistant will support the delivery of this project, assisting the project's Lichen Systematist and the Lichen Curator in sampling lichen specimens for DNA sequencing and ensure that the specimens and processes are correctly documented in accordance with NHM policies and procedures.

## Main tasks and responsibilities

- Locate type specimens within the lichen collection
- Database type specimens by transcribing label data and check/edit existing database records
- Imaging lichen specimens according to existing digitisation workflows
- Assist the project Lichen systematist and the Lichen Curator in sampling for DNA following agreed protocols.
- Assist in research on the type status of specimens by searching for literature references.

## Person Specification

- Interest in natural history; an interest in cryptogamic botany desirable.
- Experience of working with natural history collections.
- Demonstrable manual dexterity and attention to detail for handling small and fragile collections objects.
- Ability to follow instructions and work to agreed protocols.
- Computer literate, and experience with databases.
- Some experience of collections digitisation, including the transcription of specimen label data desirable.
- Ability to work effectively alone and/or as part of a team and with a variety of stakeholders.

## Thriving at the Museum: the way we work

We are proud to work at the Museum and have identified the qualities we all need to embody to reach our shared ambition. This sits alongside the Museum's values and forms the framework for the way we work.



**We are ambitious.** To make a difference on a global scale we are big and bold in our thinking and set goals which may seem impossibly high. We act with integrity, but we are not rigid or inflexible. We are excellent at what we do and look for opportunities to make a difference for the Museum wherever we can.

**We are curious.** We never stop learning. We look outwards beyond the Museum and ask questions to advance our understanding. We seek out and actively listen to different perspectives. We take time to reflect, are thoughtful and open to new ideas.

**We share the wonder.** We are captivated by the natural world, proud of our treasures and trusted guardians of our collections. We are passionate about the Museum, enjoy telling its stories and sharing our knowledge and expertise to inspire others. We don't take this for granted; we feel proud to work here.

**We are pioneering.** We are not afraid to try something new and use good judgment and evidence to take risks. We experiment, innovate, and embrace complex problems by adapting our approach. We do not dwell on setbacks or get preoccupied with problems. We find solutions.

**We team up.** We respect the expertise of others and recognise that we produce the strongest outcomes when we put the best ideas together. We trust each other, keep things simple and make it easy for others to do the right thing. We share information and skills so everyone is equipped and enabled to succeed. We never let bad moments grow into bad relationships. We inspire and empower each other to give our best.

**We act with pace.** We focus our efforts where we know we can make the biggest impact. We take tough decisions and once a plan is set, we all get behind it to make it happen. We take responsibility and don't wait to be told what to do. We are racing against time in this planetary emergency, so we work with a sense of urgency.

## General Information

All positions at the Natural History Museum are conditional subject to receipt of:

- Proof that you are legally entitled to work in the UK
- A Basic Disclosure Check from the Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS)
- Satisfactory references covering the last 3 years of your employment or education
- Health clearance

The Museum supports flexible working.



## To apply

If that sounds like you, please apply online on the Natural History Museum's careers portal.

**Closing date: 23:59, 16 June 2024**

**Interviews expected w/c 17 June 2024 and 24 June 2024**

