

Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Retail Buying & Visual Manager
Division	Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM)
Department	Ashmolean Museum
Location	Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2PH With the possibility of 1-2 days remote working per week
Grade and salary	Grade 6.1: £34,982 per annum*
Hours	Full time (37.5 hours per week)
Contract type	Fixed-term for 12 months maternity cover (July 2025 to July 2026)
Reporting to	Ashmolean Museum Commercial Director
Vacancy reference	178931
Additional information	<p>* An automatic annual increment each year will be paid up to (and not including) the discretionary range within the University of Oxford's Grade 6 salary scale.</p> <p>You may be required to work some evenings and weekends. This role may include the physical movement of retail stock and furniture for exhibition shop build. Health & Safety and manual handling training (including the use of trolleys) will be provided.</p> <p>THIS POST COULD BE CONSIDERED AS A SECONDMENT OPPORTUNITY</p> <p>Please discuss secondments with your line manager in the first instance, as you must have their agreement that you can be released for a secondment before you submit an application. For more information please go to: https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/secondments</p> <p>You are required to submit a CV and a supporting statement with your application, outlining how you meet each of the selection criteria for the role (see the 'How to Apply' section for further details).</p> <p>Please contact the recruitment team if you require the job description in an alternative format.</p>
Closing date	12.00 midday BST Friday 25 April 2025

Job description

Overview of the role

The Retail Buying & Visual Manager is responsible for the buying and visual standards of two Ashmolean Museum on-site shops and buying for the Ashmolean online shop.

The role requires the candidate to be a strong collaborator and negotiator, highly organised, creative, sales-orientated and customer-focused. They must have the ability to work methodically and collaboratively alongside the Retail & Ticketing Manager and Merchandising & Online Manager to achieve and deliver against the department's retail objectives.

Maternity leave cover post

This post is to cover the absence of the substantive postholder, who is taking a period of maternity leave. The post is available until July 2026 or the actual return of the substantive postholder, or the resignation of the substantive postholder and employment of a new postholder, whichever is the earliest.

Responsibilities

Retail Buying & Product Development

- Responsible for researching the collections, exhibition portfolios/images and trends to ensure the shop product selection and development reflects the Ashmolean brand and exceeds customer expectations.
- Responsible for attending trade fairs to maximise seasonal opportunities and select new suppliers.
- A strong negotiator with the ability to build strong relationships with valued supply partners.
- Responsible for range planning and new product development for core seasons, exhibitions, and key trading periods working with the Commercial Director to secure appropriate sign-offs.
- Responsible for selecting and developing product which contributes towards delivering the required conversion and spend per visitor against the annual budget.
- Copyright: responsible for the clearance of all images used for commercial product, working appropriately with living artists, galleries or estate holders to clear permissions and agree commercial terms.
- Alongside the Merchandising & Online Shop Manager, responsible for maximising shop sales across multiple shop sites – through selection of the right stories, adjacencies and product mix which accurately reflect the brand.
- Attend weekly trading meetings, product planning and sign off meetings to ensure the product evolves to suit the changing retail market.
- Responsible for ensuring that our buying decisions contribute towards our museum-wide decarbonisation and sustainability strategy. Ensuring that our suppliers meet our sustainability standards and our ethical trade policy requirements.

Team and Relationships - Networking & Brand Ambassador

- Line management responsibility for the Buying & Product Development Co-ordinator - responsible for their training and development.
- Responsible for nurturing and maintaining strong relationships with current and potential suppliers.

- Represent Retail at Buying & Visual conferences and trade shows.
- Support the Head of Publishing & Licensing by attending and advising at joint Retail & Licensing collaboration meetings with external licensees.

Visual & Display Standards

- Create, cascade and demonstrate visual display guidelines to the retail team and ensure the execution of the displays meets the standards required. For example, ensuring all products are priced in the correct format and font, correct signage is implemented and ensure the right product is placed in the right product stories.
- Plan and implement the temporary Exhibition shop builds.
- Working alongside the Retail & Ticketing Manager to maintain high standards of visual displays at all times. This includes onsite pop-up shops, book displays and sometimes off-site retail events.
- Working with the Retail Management Team and colleagues in photography, marketing, digital communications and PR to ensure that we have the photography we need for online and marketing campaigns and to ensure that we have solid marketing plans in place to drive awareness, conversion and sales.
- Attend and comply with health & safety and security training, general Museum procedures and policies training.

University & Other GLAM Commercial Duties

- Aid and support the delivery of commercial buying and visual best practice and training in order to maximise sales across Oxford University Gardens, Libraries and Museums as instructed by the GLAM Commercial Management teams.
- Working on some weekends and Bank Holidays.
- Participate in a regular Annual Review.
- Undertake any necessary training identified.
- Comply with health and safety regulations.
- Comply with the policies and procedures set out in the Handbook for University Support Staff/Academic Related Staff.
- Any other duties that may be required from time to time commensurate with the grade of the job.

The Ashmolean Museum reserves the right to make reasonable amendments to the job description in consultation with the post-holder at any time.

Commercial Department

The Commercial department is responsible for generating income and profit for the Ashmolean Museum. The team operate thriving retail, catering, publishing and venue hire businesses. In addition, the department also manage the licensing portfolio, picture library and photography studio. All commercial profits are invested back into the museum to support annual operating costs, enhance the collections and to further the Museum's research.

The successful candidate will be joining the Commercial Department at an exciting time of growth and development following the success of recent exhibitions including Pissarro; Pre-Raphaelites and Labyrinth. We are looking for enthusiastic and committed individuals to join our small team and contribute to the success of the department.

Selection criteria

Essential selection criteria

- Experience in retail buying and range planning in a similar fast-paced environment - preferably with comparable products.
- Experience in building and developing strong relationships with current and new suppliers - with strong negotiation skills to optimise buying results.
- Experience of working collaboratively to deliver projects / meet range buying timelines.
- Passionate about retail and in achieving sales, margin and product mix targets and supporting a small management team in achieving theirs.
- Ability to organise, prioritise and co-ordinate workload for self and team.
- Passionate about creating sustainable retail ranges – focused on finding and securing the best and most sustainable products and suppliers.
- Possesses creative flair and a strong attention to detail.
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills including the ability to interpret cascade and explain procedures clearly to all retail staff.
- Experience of copywriting in a retail context.
- Advanced IT literacy: retail systems experience, Microsoft Word, Excel & PowerPoint with the ability to produce range planning documents and sales reports.
- Able and willing to undertake personal development and skills training as required, including the attendance of training both on and off site with retail industry experts.
- Enjoys interacting with visitors, suppliers and customers.

Desirable selection criteria

- An interest in art and archaeology.
- Advanced experience in retail buying and product development.
- Advanced experience in sustainable retail procurement.
- Advanced experience in retail visual merchandising.
- Advanced experience in retail photography briefing and marketing campaign planning.

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at: <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

Hazard-specific / Safety-critical duties

This job includes hazards or safety-critical activities. If you are offered the post, you will be asked to complete a health questionnaire which will be assessed by our Occupational Health Service, and the offer of employment will be subject to a successful outcome of this assessment.

The hazards or safety-critical duties involved are as follows:

- Regular manual handling.

The Ashmolean Museum

Who we are:

Open since 1683, we are the University of Oxford's Museum of art and archaeology. Situated in the heart of the city, we are an iconic cultural destination open to everyone every day.

With c.900,000 visitors a year (pre-Covid), we are the most visited university museum in the world.

What we do:

We preserve and share our collections and knowledge to promote research, learning and enjoyment.

Why we do what we do:

To illuminate our shared humanity.

We have three strategic pillars:

Collections: We care for, develop, and widen access to our collections.

Research and Teaching: We enable, lead and deliver world-class research and teaching.

Audiences: We provide engaging and inspiring experiences for increasingly diverse audiences.

In the next five years, we have five enabling priorities:

1. To support, develop and inspire our teams;
2. To promote equity and value diversity in all that we do;
3. To ensure we have the resources to deliver our work;
4. To work towards our commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2035. Our environmental responsibility will inform our actions;
5. To ensure we have a building and infrastructure fit for purpose and our future.

For more information visit <https://www.ashmolean.org/>

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.



The Ashmolean Museum

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation

Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM)

The Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) group includes the providers of the major academic services to the divisions, and also departments with responsibilities including, but extending beyond, the immediate teaching and research needs of the University. The collections embodied within these departments are an essential part of the University's wider nature and mission. They are part of its heritage as the country's oldest University and now form a resource of national and international importance for teaching, research and cultural life; they also make a major contribution to the University's outreach and access missions.

For more information please visit: <https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/home>

How to apply

Applications are made through our e-recruitment system and you will find all the information you need about how to apply on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants).

Please note that if you do not upload a completed supporting statement and a CV, we will be unable to consider your application for this role.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

References

Please give the details of two people who have agreed to provide a reference for you. If you have previously been employed, your referees should be people who have managed you for a considerable period, and at least one of them should be your formal line manager in your most recent job. Otherwise they may be people who have supervised you in a recent college, school, or voluntary experience. It is helpful if you can tell us briefly how each referee knows you (e.g. 'line manager', 'college tutor'). Your referees should not be related to you.

Your referees will be asked to comment on your suitability for the post and to provide details of the dates of your employment; and of any disciplinary processes which are still considered 'live'. We will only take up references at offer stage.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at: <https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly on recruitment@glam.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Relocation

At the moment, the Ashmolean Museum is not offering relocation expenses to this post.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Photographs: Copyright Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, flexible working options, travel discounts including salary sacrifice schemes for bicycles and electric cars and other discounts. Staff can access a huge range of personal and professional development opportunities. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

Employee Assistance Programme

As part of our wellbeing offering staff get free access to Health Assured, a confidential employee assistance programme, available 24/7 for 365 days a year. Find out more <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/health-assured-eap>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for University staff. It offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>. There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

Family-friendly benefits

We are a family-friendly employer with one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector (see <https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/family-leave>). Our Childcare Services team provides guidance and support on childcare provision, and offers a range of high-quality childcare options at affordable prices for staff. In addition to 5 University nurseries, we partner with a number of local providers to offer in excess of 450 full time nursery places to our staff. Eligible parents are able to pay for childcare through salary sacrifice, further reducing costs. See <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>.

Supporting disability and health-related issues (inc menopause)

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including those experiencing negative effects of menopause. Information about the University's Staff Disability Advisor, is at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>. For information about how we support those going through menopause see <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/menopause-guidance>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including for research staff, BME staff, LGBT+ staff, disabled staff network and those going through menopause. Find out more at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.

Research staff

The Researcher Hub supports all researchers on fixed-term contracts. They aim to help you settle in comfortably, make connections, grow as a person, extend your research expertise and approach your next career step with confidence. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub>. Oxford's Research Staff Society is a collective voice for our researchers. They also organise social and professional networking activities for researchers. Find out more <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/connecting-other-researchers/oxford-research-staff-society>