Ho Family Student Guide Program Application, 2023–2024

Division of Academic and Public Programs, Harvard Art Museums
Paid position, open to Harvard College sophomores and juniors (with the opportunity to stay on through senior year)
Work-study eligible

$16.00/hr. (work-study students encouraged to apply)
Approx. 10 hours/week for the academic year: includes training, research, and delivery of tours
Application open to Harvard College sophomores and juniors (with the opportunity to stay on through senior year)
Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until 11:59pm on Tuesday, September 12, 2023

SEO Job ID 20286

Position Description
The Harvard Art Museums are now accepting applications from Harvard sophomores and juniors for the Ho Family Student Guide Program. The program prepares Student Guides to create and lead original, research-based tours of the museums for the public, and other audiences by request. Taking place in person and occasionally online, the tours approach the museums via a theme of the guides’ own choosing, sample the variety and diversity of the collections, and engage visitors in conversation. Additionally, Student Guides support other museum-based education programs, most notably our free, 10-week U.S. Citizenship Course, which prepares aspiring U.S. citizens for the Naturalization Test through special tours of the American collections. Student Guides only sign up for the tours that work with their schedules, but they are required to lead 1-2 Citizenship Course tours a semester. Student Guides also develop educational and interpretive materials for social media, including Instagram (@harvardarthappens), and YouTube (@harvartmuseums). Students from all concentrations are encouraged to apply; no art history, studio art, or museum experience is necessary. (Historically, Student Guides have come from a wide range of academic backgrounds, including Astrophysics, Applied Mathematics, Philosophy, Government, History and Literature, AFVS, and History of Art & Architecture.)

Training
Student Guides participate in a rigorous training program to gain knowledge of the collections and to develop skills in research, critical thinking, visual analysis, public speaking, and public engagement. This training program is organized around weekly meetings at the museums with the Manager of Student Programs and all the active Student Guides – in other words, the Student Guide community. Historically, we have had about twenty active guides at a time, sophomores to seniors, who stay with the
program until they graduate (though only sophomores and juniors are admitted). In addition to workshops on research methods and tour techniques, the meetings regularly consist of object workshops – informal presentations of tour stops in progress that yield feedback for the presenters and greater collections knowledge for the whole group.

The Student Guides also meet regularly with curators, conservators, and other museum staff. These meetings, along with optional field trips to other museums and art spaces, help the Student Guides develop a transdepartmental view of the museums’ inner workings, and a sense of what’s going on in the museum world, adding depth and context to their perspectives. Significantly, there are also opportunities to learn from the public, not least because our goal with each tour is less to advance an argument than to facilitate a conversation.

**Mandatory training sessions will be held for two hours weekly**, typically at the Harvard Art Museums, except during reading and examination periods. (The time is TBD but a strong possibility is Tuesdays, 3-5pm ET, with the new Student Guides starting by the first week of October.) Potentially, there may be work opportunities when classes are not in session, if desired.

Typically, new Student Guides will not debut their first tour until the end of their first semester, at the earliest.

**Tours**

Upon successful completion of training, Student Guides will offer their own thematic, research-based tours of the Harvard Art Museums. We expect to offer drop-in tours for the public on Saturdays and Sundays at 11am and 2pm (each one lasting about 40 minutes). In the Fall, the U.S. Citizenship Course will meet on Saturdays, 10:30am-1:00pm (September 16 – November 18). Student Guides only sign up for the tours that work with their schedules, but they are required to lead 1-2 Citizenship Course tours a semester.

**Qualifications**

— No art history, fine arts, or museum experience is necessary, but interest in exploring and sharing ideas about the Harvard Art Museums is required.
— Strong research skills and the ability to work independently.
— Comfort with public speaking; prior teaching/tutoring experience preferred.
— PBHA involvement or other recent community service experience valued.
— Excellent interpersonal communication skills.
— Professional, welcoming, and engaging demeanor.
— Must be available to attend mandatory training sessions during the academic year.

**To Apply**

Please submit the following documents:

1. Cover letter and résumé: submit a cover letter (maximum one page) that discusses your interest in the position and a résumé that clearly indicates your graduation year, concentration, education, work/volunteer experience, and Harvard email address.

2. Description of tour experience: describe your experience of the virtual Student Guide tour “Confronting the Colonial Gaze,” with Jacqueline Zoeller (500 words maximum). A recording can be found on the Harvard Art Museums’ YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGT-
6. Be specific as to what you found interesting, exciting, annoying, etc., and what you felt could be improved. Your response will not be shared with other students; it will be used for the purposes of this application only.

3. Short response: select any work of art in the Harvard Art Museums. Spend at least 15 minutes looking closely at it in person, if possible. If not, a reproduction is acceptable. Write a brief response (500 words maximum). You do not need to do any research using secondary sources; your response should be based on your experience of the work. Please include the title and artist/maker (where known), a short description, your reaction, what questions it provokes for you, and what possible themes or ideas you would want to develop were you to create a tour featuring it. Themes that reflect something of your academic and/or personal interests are welcome and encouraged.

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until 11:59pm on Tuesday, September 12, 2023. Apply by submitting all of the above materials online through the Student Employment Office (Job ID 20286). Applications will not be considered complete unless a cover letter, résumé, description of tour experience, and short response have been received. Please note that applications will not be accepted via email.

Please contact Camran Mani (he/him pronouns), Manager of Student Programs and Director of the Ho Family Student Guide Program, with any questions: camran_mani@harvard.edu.

Sign up for our student-only email list to learn about upcoming student events and opportunities, and to receive the Harvard Art Museums monthly email newsletter.