



THE JOHN & MABLE RINGLING MUSEUM OF ART
STATE ART MUSEUM OF FLORIDA | FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

**The Ringling Docent Program
New Docent Training: Museum of Art
March 2020 – February 2021**

Application Deadline: Friday, November 8, 2019

The Ringling's Docent Program

Docents are currently being recruited to conduct tours of the Museum of Art, including the permanent collection and select special exhibitions.

In addition to general public tours, docents lead tours for school groups, accessibility groups, private groups, and assist with special events. Training for other venues may be added later at the discretion of staff.

To be considered for the program, individuals must:

- Be capable of providing tours a minimum of 10 out of 12 months annually to diverse audiences, including families and children
- Demonstrate solid public speaking skills
- Be flexible, dependable, highly motivated, and a team player
- Possess good customer service skills and problem solving abilities
- Have an active e-mail account and be comfortable using computers for assignment scheduling, communication with staff and volunteer colleagues, word processing, and internet navigation
- Be physically capable of leading tours for extended periods of time

Once admitted into the Docent Program, individuals are required to:

- Commit to a term of service with the Docent Program that is a minimum of two years
- Sign a contract confirming an understanding of and adherence to Docent Program guidelines and policies; participate in regular reviews and performance assessments to ensure the highest quality of visitor experience
- Successfully engage visitors using conversation-based tour techniques in all designated venues
- Provide a minimum of 75 hours annually to the Docent Program consisting of tours, meetings, and trainings
- Attend all required meetings and trainings in order to maintain tour authorizations
- Abide by the policies set forth in the Docent Program Bylaws and The Ringling Volunteer Handbook and Volunteer Services Advisory Council Bylaws

Museum of Art Docent Training, March 2020 – February 2021

Course Content and Expectations:

The Ringling will provide training to Docent Candidates on the Museum of Art's permanent collection, visitor engagement skills, learning theory, and museum education best practices.

Content and training will be presented by museum staff and guest lecturers. Sessions will include classroom lectures, group discussions, multi-media presentations, and gallery-based learning. Class participants will be assigned homework, which will include extensive reading and writing assignments and out-of-class gallery and library research. Participants will be required to successfully pass written tests and a model tour prior to full acceptance into the Docent Program at The Ringling.

Fees and Course Material Expenses:

There is no charge to enroll in the docent training program. There is also no annual fee charged to Docents once admitted to the Docent corps. However, active Docents are encouraged to make annual voluntary contributions to fund Docent Advisory Council activities, and all Docents are encouraged to become members of The Ringling.

Docent Candidates are strongly encouraged to buy the course textbooks, at an approximate cost of \$300, so that the texts are available for their continued reference throughout Candidates' tenure as Docents. However, Candidates may opt to borrow a set of textbooks for personal use during the course; these textbooks must be returned to the Education Department upon successful completion of the training. Additionally, The Ringling Art Library, a non-circulating library, will have a limited number of copies of all required texts for reference. Handouts on pertinent subject areas will be provided as needed.

Dress Guidelines:

Business-casual attire is generally recommended for Docents and comfortable footwear is highly suggested. Clothing and shoes should be in good condition and free of advertising, logos, or branding that do not positively support Florida State University and The Ringling. Additionally, please help us accommodate our colleagues and visitors who are chemically sensitive by not wearing strong fragrances or other scented products. Questions related to the dress requirements for this assignment should be directed to The Ringling's Education Department.

Training Schedule and Attendance Requirements:

The first session of the upcoming docent training class will take place on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM. Participation in this initial session will meet the requirement established for all new Ringling volunteers to complete general museum orientation and intake prior to beginning in their designated assignment. (NOTE: Active Ringling volunteers who have participated in the current orientation program format will not need to take part in the February 12 session.)

Following the session on February 12, all future classes will take place on Tuesdays from March 3, 2020, to February 9, 2021, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

The class will be divided into three roughly equal sections.

- Section One: March 3 – May 26, 2020, with a break the week of June 2, 2020
- Section Two: June 9 – September 1, 2020, with a break September 8 – October 6, 2020 (general tour assessments will be conducted during this timeframe)
- Section Three: October 13, 2020 – February 9, 2021, with holiday breaks the week of November 24, 2020, December 22, 2020, and December 29, 2020.

Modifications to the class schedule may be needed based on speaker or venue availability. Participants will be provided with as much notice as possible when schedule changes occur.

While participants are encouraged not to miss any portion of the training, **individuals may not miss more than three class sessions per section.** Candidates will be responsible for making up assignments and reviewing content covered during any missed classes. **Absences beyond the stated limits will result in a review of the individual's status and their ability to continue with the training.**

Time for additional self-study, reading, and homework should be considered outside of the regular training schedule. Individuals will be reviewed on their skills and scope of knowledge using both written assessments

and model tours. Tour assessments will also fall outside of the scheduled weekly classes. Advance notice of assessment dates will be provided to class members.

Participants in the new Docent Training Program will be invited to attend Docent General Meetings and the Annual Docent Luncheon. Additional training sessions will be scheduled as needed. There is no charge to enroll in the Docent Training Program. However, active Docents are encouraged to make annual voluntary contributions to fund Docent Advisory Council activities, and all Docents are encouraged to become Ringling members.

Application Process

To be considered for the Museum of Art Docent Training, individuals must successfully complete the entire application and selection process.

The initial steps in this process involve the following:

- Complete The Ringling's on-line volunteer application, <https://www.ringling.org/volunteer-application> (**current Ringling volunteers do not need to complete a new application**)
- Send an email to volunteers@ringling.org and attach an up-to-date resume or curriculum vitae (CV) as well as a letter that explains your interest in the Docent role and outlines the characteristics that make you uniquely qualified to become a Docent. ***Only items submitted via email will be considered.***

Materials received by the **November 8, 2019, submission deadline** will be carefully reviewed, and those who best meet the Docent Program criteria will receive notifications and more detailed information regarding the next steps in the application process.

Recruitment Timeline

September 2019	Recruitment begins
September - November 2019	Phone interviews conducted
November 2019 – January 2020	In-person interviews conducted
January 2020	Museum of Art tour shadowing Meet-and-Greet event with staff and Docents Final acceptance notices sent to applicants
February 2020	Initial training session/new volunteer orientation
March 2020	Docent training program begins

Please remember that, due to a high volume of applications for a limited number of openings, application to the Docent Program does not guarantee acceptance. A competitive selection process is in place to ensure high caliber of tour presentation and public representation for The Ringling.