

Casual Visitor Services Assistant

Cambridge University Botanic Garden



The role



Purpose of the role

This is a varied and interesting job suitable for an adaptable applicant. The successful candidate will work in a team under the supervision of the Head of Visitor Services and their Deputy and Team Leaders and act as the Garden's and the University's first point of contact with the majority of the Garden's visitors.

The Visitor Services team are responsible for welcoming visitors to the Garden. They provide entry control and sale of admission tickets, Friends' memberships, publications etc, act as a point of contact for enquirers and visitors, issue/check permits, patrol the Garden to ensure the safety and security of its collections, buildings and visitors, ensure public areas are clean and facilities stocked, assist with room set up and break down for educational and other activities and events, ensure the Rules of Admission are observed and unlock and lock the Garden and its buildings.

Key responsibilities

Visitor Services

- Provides a friendly welcome to all visitors to the Garden.
- Processes Friends membership application forms initially prior to transmission to the Friends Administrator for attention.
- Explains Rules of Admission and policies of the Garden to visitors.
- Provides information to visitors.
- Answers queries from visitors, referring them to other staff as and when required.
- Checks non-charging group visits against entries on the daily Diary Sheet.
- Ensures wheelchairs are available for visitors in accordance with the Garden's procedures for wheelchair loan and provides assistance if required.
- Maintains a supply of literature at the gates and ensures it is up to date, displayed and readily available to visitors.
- Books out Education Packs from the ticket office, and restocks the contents on return from loan.
- Maintains lost property procedure and lost property register.

Sales and Cash Handling

- Sells and issues admission tickets using Electronic Point of Sale system (EPOS) till and software.
- Sells Friends memberships, guided tours, events tickets and guide books and other Garden literature to visitors.
- Cashes up takings at the end of each day and completes daily cash sheet.
- Monitors a daily float and refers to the Team Leader for change as required.
- Ensures safe deposit of takings to the Administrative Office safe using secure cash bag system.

Security

The following ranges of duties are carried out by the team, undertaking regular patrolling of the Garden, according to a rota drawn up by the Head of Visitor Services.

- Open public gates at specified time.
- Clear Garden and ensure all visitors have exited at closing time. Secures and locks gates.
- Closes and/or checks non-public buildings to ensure they are locked and secure at the end of the day.
- Closes and locks staff entrance gates at the end of the day and checks them at other agreed times of the day.
- Opens and closes Glasshouses and other buildings at appropriate times.
- Responds to alarms (fire/intruder) and takes appropriate action as necessary, eg by ensuring evacuation of visitors from buildings; assists University Security Office personnel with intruder alarm response.
- Provide help to emergency services attending an incident, for example, by directing them to incident and helping with liaison.
- Providing entry control at gates by checking admission cards and permits. May be required to refuse admission according to the Garden rules and regulations.
- Ensures Rules of Admission are observed. Check visitor admission tickets particularly if illegal entry is suspected.
- Collaborates with University Security Office in connection with Garden security.

Continued.

The role (continued)

- Checks boundary fences to ensure they are secure and reports breaches to Team Leader for reporting to Head of Visitor Services and Head of Estates and Operations.
- Role-holder may be asked to assist in providing visitor services cover for events taking place out of normal Garden opening hours on an occasional basis for which payment will be made.
- Provide security and a deterrent against theft of plants from the collection and Garden equipment. Prevent damage by visitors to the Garden features, landscape and infrastructure, approaching visitors as required if rules and regulations of the Garden are being breached.
- Checks parking permits in designated areas against departmental parking data.
- Occasionally works outside normal Garden opening times to provide visitor support at events, eg late night opening in the summer months.

Role-holder would rectify minor problems and report more serious problems or failures to Team Leader for advice or action.

Servicing Ticket Offices

- Transports supplies to ticket office to ensure they are stocked with tickets, publications and floats for the till.
- Sweeps Brookside and Station Road entrances and environs ensuring they remain in a clean and tidy condition.

Safety of Visitors

- Provides assistance to visitors as required including responding to emergencies and calling a first-aider or the emergency services as necessary.
- Notes Garden works or defects, eg trip hazards that represent a danger to visitors, and takes appropriate remedial action or reports problem to Team Leader or Head of Estates and Operations (Departmental Safety Officer) who will inform horticultural and other staff as required.
- Ensure public entrances, facilities and their paths are clear of snow and ice during adverse weather conditions.

Servicing of Site

- Empties litter bins in Garden (picnic area, café, cycle park and gates) and collects recycling from buildings and offices as required.
- Leaflet dispensers are stocked.
- Litter picks throughout the Garden.
- Checks and rearranges tables and seating in outdoor seating area of the café.
- Sweeps outdoor seating area of café at least daily using leaf-blowing and other equipment when required.
- Cleans directional and other signage regularly.
- Under instruction from the Head of Horticulture, Section Heads or their staff, switches hoses on for overnight irrigation during periods of drought.
- Removes and disposes of animal droppings (badger, fox, deer).

Servicing of Buildings, Sites and Events

Checks Classroom, Hayloft, Garden Room and meeting rooms and their environs on at least a daily basis or more regularly before and after use by hirers and/or staff to ensure they are clean and tidy with particular attention to the following:

- Sets up tables and chairs for courses and meeting as per the instructions provided by the Education and Administration Office. Puts away furniture post event and secures room.
- Checks the toilets are working and clean and stocked with soap and toilet paper. If necessary, cleans toilet areas and/or posts out of order signs as necessary and reports faults immediately to Team Leader.
- Checks kitchen areas are clean and tidy and stocked with cleaning materials, tea-towels, etc.
- Checks leaflet dispensers are stocked.
- Checks lights are working and requests for replacement bulbs have been lodged with the maintenance section as required.
- Checks that audio visual equipment is in good working order, reporting faults to the Team Leader and organising replacement equipment where appropriate.
- Sweeps the paths and entrances to the building and ensures they are litter free.
- Litter picks the outdoor areas of the building.
- Checks and rearranges tables and seating in outdoor seating area of the café.
- Role-holder would rectify minor problems and report more serious problems or failures to Team Leader for advice or action.

Enquiry Point (Only occasional cover may be required, in the absence of the Receptionist)

- Welcomes visitors and contacts staff as required.
- Responds to all enquiries by telephone, email and by personal callers.
- Date stamps and distributes all incoming mail.
- Take bookings for wheelchair and electric buggy bookings by telephone, e-mail and in person from the public. Complete booking forms and pass information to ticket offices as required.
- Processes lost property. Completes lost and found property register and arranges disposal of unclaimed items as set out in procedures.
- Receives delivery of all goods and notifies appropriate section/individual to arrange collection.

The Head of Department may also require the role-holder to perform other duties appropriate to the grade of the post from time to time.

Person specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications		
Educated to GCSE level or equivalent	√	
Skills		
Committed to providing first class customer service, responsible, articulate and numerate.	√	
Exceptional team working skills and ability to deal with a variety of people in a friendly and professional manner.	√	
Ability to exercise tact and diplomacy when dealing with complaints and difficult situations.	√	
Experience		
Previous experience working within a visitor-orientated environment.	√	
Cash handling and cashing up procedures.	√	
Familiarity with administration, security matters, cash tills and protocols governing the use of transceivers.	√	
Additional Requirements		
Willing to work outside and undertake practical manual tasks in a wide variety of weather conditions.	√	
An interest in plants and the environment.		√

Cambridge University Botanic Garden



Cambridge University Botanic Garden is a 40 acre historic garden which is home to an internationally important and diverse collection of over 8000 plant species from across the world. It combines its role as a research and teaching facility for the University with that of public education and is an important amenity enjoyed by over 300,000 visitors a year.

The present Garden was opened in 1846, and was the vision of John Stevens Henslow, Professor of Botany from 1825-1861 (and mentor to Charles Darwin). The eastern half of the site was then developed in the 1950's.

As well as a vitally important living collection, the Garden provides facilities and horticultural expertise for any member of the University of Cambridge. It is also used for educational and learning activities, from pre-school children upwards and also provides a varied programme of adult education courses.

Garden highlights include the Glasshouse range, Winter Garden, Dry Garden, Scented Garden, Pinetum, the Systematic Beds, Rock Garden and lake as well as year round interest.

We have over 8,000 Friends who pay an annual membership to the Garden and enjoy it, together with

our other visitors, as a beautiful amenity and a place to relax and unwind.

Regular events are held in the Garden such as Festival of Plants, Twilight, Apple Day and Sounds Green music evenings, as well as the occasional flowering of a Titan Arum.

Today we have approximately 60-65 members of staff across Horticulture, Curation, Learning, Visitor Services, Estate Management, Administration and Development under the Directorship of Professor Beverley Glover.

All teams work together in the day to day running of the Garden, as well as long-term planning, maintenance and development. There are two main office buildings on site, Cory Lodge and 1 Brookside, as well as offices behind the Glasshouse range, together with reserve glasshouses, poly-tunnels and potting sheds. There are also two staff room facilities on site as well as the Garden Café and Shop. Facilities also include a Schools' Garden with a purpose built in-door teaching space for schools, and a Classroom. Parking is also available for members of staff and it is a short walk to Cambridge Train Station.

The Botanic Garden is part of the University's School of Biological Sciences.

How to apply

Please send your CV to admin@botanic.cam.ac.uk including all relevant experience and detailing your availability during May—September 2026, number of days per week you would like to work and whether you are available for Saturday/Sunday work.



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