

Committee on Museum Professional Training Programs (COMPT) Standards and Best Practices Guidelines for Museum Professional Training Programs

Overview

Museum professional training programs promote a cohesive view of museums as complex organizations, how and where they fit into the larger cultural landscape, and the educational and economic role that they play in society. The education of museum professionals must enable them to meet current challenges and anticipate future needs of very complex organizations subject to ongoing, rapid change.

The membership of the Committee on Museum Professional Training (COMPT) is comprised largely of academic programs, independent training providers and interested museum professionals. These Standards and Best Practices Guidelines for Museum Professional Training Programs (the Guidelines) are not a "one size fits all" and are meant to be aspired to and adapted by the broad range of member programs. These Guidelines are not fixed, but are reassessed and revised as needs and perceptions change.

COMPT has developed these Guidelines to serve many purposes:

- Function as guidelines for members of the community of museum professional educators, learners, and professionals in the field
- Recognize common responsibilities and objectives
- Identify appropriate content, teaching methodologies, measures for outcomes and assessment
- Be adaptable to a variety of learning programs

Training Program Goals

- Provide excellent education and training of museum professionals that melds the theoretical with the practical
- Develop leadership abilities and initiative, while stressing the importance of teamwork within and outside of the institution
- Integrate respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and diverse opinions into the fabric of curriculum content and structure
- Stress the importance of advocacy within the profession, with the public, and with policy makers
- Disseminate research through publication and professional practice
- Acknowledge the value of museum traditions while teaching innovation and creative problem-solving
- Foster communication and exchange with the museum community and with external audiences
- Promote ethical and professional behavior in museum practice and all aspects of the field.

Training Program Content

- Transmission of both theoretical and practical in-depth knowledge of museums, an understanding of the role of museums, knowledge of best museum professional practices, and the creation of lifelong learning goals
- Curriculum that reflects and responds to current and emergent needs in museums and their communities, including the challenges of new technologies
- Rigorous standards of scholarship that emphasize the importance of theory and critical analysis
- Insight into the complex interdependence of professional specializations of the field as well as external forces that shape relevant job skills and responsibilities
- Recognition and understanding of multiple perspectives and the benefits of collaboration and critical thinking
- Leadership and management training integrated into the curriculum
- Opportunities for civic engagement and a commitment to serving the public
- Directed internships, practicums or fieldwork developed and sustained, that provide essential experience and contacts as appropriate to the pedagogy of the program
- Teaching competencies that enable learners to be competitive in the job market and empower them to implement effective career planning and development.

Program Instructors and Instructional Approaches

- Significant experience in the field and active engagement in the network of museum professionals
- Ability to teach in varied learning environments and respond to the needs of diverse learners
- Expertise in relevant tools, technology, resources and education pedagogy
- Knowledge of past and current museum literature and related sources and materials
- Instructional approaches that emphasize research, analytical and communication skills
- Pedagogy that fosters creative, critical, contextual thinking and ethical practice
- Responsibility to develop and/or contribute to innovative teaching methods
- Practice and encourage respect for high professional standards and workplace behavior.

Program Responsibilities

- Demonstrate ability to deliver and evaluate promised content, pedagogy and outcomes
- Provide access to appropriate resources to deliver stated curriculum
- Provide transparency in program goals, content, requirements, qualifications, standards of evaluation, and outcomes for learners
- Maintain knowledge of current and emerging issues in order to achieve program currency and relevancy and reflect best practices in the field
- Develop and implement methods of qualitative assessment
- Clearly communicate market realities, demands, and compensation
- Create and sustain a climate of mutual respect that encourages free exchange of ideas
- Further the development of the field of museums and museum training through research, professional participation, and advocacy
- Mentor and assist learners in the ongoing pursuit of their professional goals and maintain alumni relationships.