

## ***Background***

The British Museum holds the greatest collection in the world representative of human cultural achievement, ancient and modern. It was founded by Parliament in 1753 with the purpose of preserving and maintaining the collection “not only for the inspection and entertainment of the learned and curious, but for the general use and benefit of the public”. That founding purpose remains true today. It is a centre of research and inquiry at all levels, providing a forum for the expression of many different cultural perspectives and a place to increase understanding of the cultural connections and influences linking people of both the UK and the world - it is a museum of the world, for the world.

The British Museum holds a unique collection of over 8 million objects and employs about 1,000 staff. It is the leading visitor attraction in the UK, receiving over six million visitors a year before the COVID-19 pandemic; one in five tourists to London visits the Museum. It has extensive partnerships across the UK, with nine million people a year seeing a British Museum object outside of London. It is the world’s most generous lender of objects and has an extensive programme of international touring exhibitions, consultancy and training.

Since its foundation, the Museum has been governed by a Board of Trustees responsible for ensuring that the collection is housed in safety and is available for study and enjoyment by current and future generations in the UK and across the world.

The Board comprises 25 Trustees, drawn from a broad range of people with diverse skills and experience, reflecting the Museum’s national and international role, as well as its mixed public, charitable and commercial business model. The Trustees provide vision, direction, control and accountability in fulfilling the Museum’s public purpose. They uphold the highest levels of probity, financial stewardship and corporate performance.

For more information about the British Museum and for a list of current Trustees, please visit the *About us* section of the Museum’s website: [www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org)

## ***Role specification for British Museum Trustee Appointments***

The British Museum Board wishes to recruit three Trustees: two to fill current vacancies and one for a vacancy from January 2021.

The British Museum has been transformed over the last 15 years, but it faces many challenges which the Trustees will have to address to ensure that it continues to thrive and to maintain its world-class position. Trustees will have to respond to the economic challenge posed by reductions in public funding over recent years, and more recently, by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to exercise their fiduciary responsibilities to the Museum at a time of increased debate about its role and purpose. Trustees also need to lead a fundamental reshaping of the presentation of the collections both physically, intellectually and digitally, and to oversee the development and implementation of long-term plans to improve the building to make it fit for purpose over the next century.

### ***Essential Criteria***

All successful candidates will demonstrate:

- An understanding of and commitment to the objectives and work of the British Museum as a museum of the world for the world.
- A commitment to Trustees' fiduciary responsibilities, which are to preserve and enhance the collection for the benefit of present and future generations, and to make it as freely accessible as possible.
- A commitment to supporting the Museum's role in preserving cultural heritage, and in using the collection to support education and the understanding of British and world cultures and history.
- Proven ability to take responsibility and demonstrate sound judgement in strategic decision-making ability.
- A commitment to supporting fundraising activities.
- Excellent communications and representational skills.
- A clear understanding of the principles of good corporate governance.

The British Museum is also keen to attract those with strong international ties, including those based outside the UK.

In making its final recommendation to the Prime Minister, the advisory panel will take account of the need to maintain diversity of the Board.

### ***Time Commitment***

Successful candidates will need to spend time familiarising themselves with the Museum and its workings and keeping that knowledge up to date. The Board meets four times a year, with most meetings and associated activities lasting half a day and one meeting usually spent away from the Museum over a weekend. Most Trustees also serve on one or more committees or advisory groups, each meeting around three to four times a year. Additional time will be required to study papers, to attend events at the Museum, including fundraising events, and to represent the Museum at other functions.

### ***Location of Meetings***

Board and Committee meetings are usually held at the Museum.

Remuneration

The post is unpaid, but travel and accommodation expenses can be claimed.

Term of Appointment

Four years.