**Kalamazoo Valley Museum**

**Interpretation Specialist Handbook**

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**INTERPRETATION SPECIALIST HANDBOOK**

Table of Contents

Section I: Job Overview

1. **Work Duties**
	1. Job Description
	2. Basic Interpretation and other floor duties
	3. Front Desk Operations:
		1. [G:\Museum\Workarea\Front Desk\Manuals & Procedures\Operations Manual Nov. 2015.docx](file:///G%3A%5CMuseum%5CWorkarea%5CFront%20Desk%5CManuals%20%26%20Procedures%5COperations%20Manual%20Nov.%202015.docx)
	4. Program Areas
	5. Exhibits and Collections
	6. Progression of training and job proficiencies; benchmarks for success
2. **Expectations and Competencies**
	1. Dependability & Reliability
	2. Interpersonal Skills
	3. Professionalism
	4. Public Speaking & Presentation Skills
	5. Experiential Teaching Skills
3. **Department Practices & Procedures**
	1. Expected Availability
	2. Time off requests
	3. Leave time or calling in sick procedures
	4. Dress code
	5. Additional information
4. **Assessment**
	1. Self-assessment chart
	2. Supervisor review

Section II: Operations Manual, Interpretation and Content Training

1. **Organizational History**
2. History of Kalamazoo Valley Museum
3. Formation and early years
4. KVM’s Dedicated Millage and KVCC governance
5. Mission Statement and Current Strategic Plan & Initiatives
6. **Customer Service and Front Desk Operations:**
	1. [G:\Museum\Workarea\Front Desk\Manuals & Procedures\Operations Manual Nov. 2015.docx](file:///G%3A%5CMuseum%5CWorkarea%5CFront%20Desk%5CManuals%20%26%20Procedures%5COperations%20Manual%20Nov.%202015.docx)
7. **Exhibit Content:**
	1. Transcribed permanent galleries labels
		1. [G:\Museum\Workarea\Front Desk\Manuals & Procedures\Kalamazoo Direct To You.docx](file:///G%3A%5CMuseum%5CWorkarea%5CFront%20Desk%5CManuals%20%26%20Procedures%5CKalamazoo%20Direct%20To%20You.docx)
8. **Methodologies and Principles of Museum Interpretation**

Section III. Professional Standards in Museums

1. **American Alliance of Museums National Standards for Museums**
2. Museum Ethics and Standards
	1. <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/ethics-standards-and-best-practices/standards>
	2. <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/ethics-standards-and-best-practices/education-and-interpretation>
3. National Standards and Best Practices for American Museums

 **B. Interpretation**

1. Excerpts from Freeman Tilden’s *Interpreting Our Heritage*
2. Articles from Museum Education Roundtable
3. Articles from Museum News

Section I: Job Overview

1. **Work Duties**

**Kalamazoo Valley Community College**

**Kalamazoo Valley Museum**

**Job Description**

**TITLE:** Interpretation Specialist, Part Time Staff

**PAY GRADE LEVEL:** Part-Time Group 3

**REPORTS TO:** Coordinator of Interpretation

**BASIC FUNCTION AND RESPONSIBILITY:** A primary responsibility of all persons assigned to this job title is to support the instructional mission of the institution and to promote positive student and customer relations through a team philosophy with other staff at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum. This position requires constant contact with public visitors in a positive and considerate manner as well as the ability to communicate effectively to a broad demographic.

**CHARACTERISTICS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** The essential functions, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, may include the characteristic duties, knowledge, skills, abilities noted herein, however, this list represents EXAMPLES ONLY, and is not a comprehensive listing of all functions and tasks performed by positions found in this job classification

The primary role of Museum Interpretation Specialist is to creatively engage patrons regularly throughout the museum, front desk, galleries and special program areas with courtesy and positivity to enhance the visitor experience to inspire and support our inquiry based learning model.

Delivers quality customer service by greeting every visitor, answering questions, communicating museum program information and services onsite as well as over the phone.

This position will assist with teaching educational programs, topics cover, history and science for pre-k-adult audiences in workshop and gallery settings.

To ensure visitor and exhibit safety, interpreter will enforce museum standards and policies with composure and courtesy.

Other duties will include operation of museum exhibits & equipment, opening & closing duties, point of sale software, speaking to school groups, performing demonstrations & multimedia presentations, assist with activities or programs, day to day upkeep of exhibits, organizational & clerical tasks and offsite programs representing the museum.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** High School Diploma or equivalent.

Excellent public speaking and communication skills required. Ability to work with large groups, school children and as a team member, with joy.

Possess strong interpersonal skills, ability to work well with diverse groups of people including, but not limited to school children, staff and general public.

Ability to multitask and react positively in a changing environment in order to make good decisions that occasionally resolves conflict.

Operate a computer, exchange regular correspondence utilizing the institution’s email service and operate a point of sale software is required. Participates in regularly scheduled staff meetings and ongoing training/professional development opportunities.

**PREFERRED QUALIFIACTIONS AND EXPERIENCE:** Previous experience in an educational setting, focusing on state and/or local history and/or science education is preferred. Previous public speaking and/or theater experience is preferred. Previous experience interacting and leading students K-12 grade is preferred. Knowledge of astronomy, earth and space science and willingness to learn new technology is desirable.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS:** Intensive walking and standing is required, roughly 6 hours during standard shift and the ability to push, pull or lift up to 25 pounds. Ability to bend, stoop and reach as exhibits require.

**HOURS TO BE WORKED PER WEEK:** 16 – 29 HRS maximum

**WORK HOURS:** Flexible within the Museum’s operating hours, including but not limited to weekends, evenings & some holidays.

**New Hire Training**

New hire IS will go through a progression of training phases in which their work expectations will be focused on benchmark accomplishments. At the end of each phase, IS will be evaluated on the basis of satisfactory performance of duties listed below.

IS will learn and practice the basic work of the job and progress to tasks that require deeper knowledge, more intensive training, and specialization in program areas. Staff who do not meet the requirements of each phase will not be advanced to the next phase, and will be given directions – action steps – by which they will accomplish required training and demonstrated proficiencies.

At the end of 6 months or a year, IS still not performing satisfactorily, he/she could be terminated from KVM employment.

**Progression of Training & Performance Expectations for New-Hire IS**

After the **first three months**, IS will be able to satisfactorily perform the following:

* Visitor and school-group orientation to exhibits, lockers, bathrooms, etc.
* POS operations and cash-out procedures
* General opening/closing procedures for the Museum
* Telephone operation & customer service functions (includes knowledge of all Museum functions and org chart)
* Hands-on program table activities
* Artifact investigation principles and techniques (Mystery Artifact demonstration)
* Basic operation of Stryker Theater for presentations
* Regular floor rotation including Children’s Landscape
* Able to communicate Museum expectations of visitors in all galleries and exhibits

After the **second three months**, IS will be able to satisfactorily perform the following:

* Learn and deliver one workshop and two additional demonstrations
* Successfully conducting circle time programs
* Learn and work in one program area (planetarium, Hands-on preparation)
* Continued development of proficiencies in all of the 1st phase of training

After **six months**, IS will advance to the following:

* Special project assignments (assist with research, program development, exhibit packing/unpacking, museON “What Is It,” off-site programs/vendor table, etc.)
* Learn additional workshops, demos, program areas

After **one year**, IS will advance further, with the following assignments/privileges:

* Act as “lead interpreter” to assist with training new hires (such as being the focus of a job-shadowing new hire)
* Coordinate IS lunch and break rotations
* Choose a specialized focus of any of the above duties

IS staff may be fast tracked accordingly if they excel in the above tasks and as program areas demand staff.

1. **Expectations and Competencies**

**Expectations and Competencies**

**All KVM Staff**

* **Dependability & Reliability (SI 1, SI 2, SI 3, SI 4, SI 5, SI 6)**
	+ Demonstrates regular and punctual attendance for work, including meetings or appointments
	+ Demonstrates appropriate behavior consistently and predictably.
	+ Follows through on commitments and consistently meets deadlines.
	+ Diligently checks work to ensure that all essential details have been considered.
	+ Follows written and verbal directions; complies with organizational rules, policies and procedures.
* **Interpersonal Skills (SI 3, SI 4, SI 5, SI 6)**
	+ Demonstrates meaningful two-way communication (i.e., speaks clearly, pays close attention and seeks to understand others, listens attentively and clarifies information).
	+ Regularly reads and corresponds with museum staff using KVCC’s institutional email.
	+ Looks for ways to help people and pitches in to help others.
	+ Shows sincere interest in others and their concerns, and demonstrates sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others; recognizes when relationships with others are strained.
	+ Recognizes and accurately interprets the verbal and nonverbal behavior of others and responds appropriately.
	+ Is flexible and open-minded when dealing with a wide range of people; demonstrates sensitivity and respect for the opinions, perspectives, customs and individual differences of others.
* **Professionalism (SI 1, SI 6)**
	+ Demonstrates/models a positive attitude towards work.
	+ Maintains a high standard of quality in areas of responsibility.
	+ Demonstrates self-control by maintaining composure and courtesy when dealing with patrons and colleagues in stressful situations.
	+ Demonstrates initiative by completing unassigned tasks independently with accuracy.

**Expectations Unique to IS Staff**

* **Public Speaking & Presentation Skills (SI 2, SI 3, SI 4, SI 5)**
	+ Exhibits confidence when speaking to large groups or individual patrons.
	+ Adjusts tone and volume of voice to reflect the changing Museum atmosphere.
	+ Prepares presentation content and materials in advance for scheduled groups.
	+ Uses vocabulary and concepts appropriate for age of audience.
	+ Maintains eye contact and attention of audience by asking appropriate questions.
* **Experiential Teaching Skills (SI 2, SI 3, SI 4, SI 5)**
	+ Develops content knowledge of exhibits, collections, and programs in order to engage audiences in conversation. This may include asking patrons questions and/or answering theirs.
	+ Encourages positive individual and group behaviors in galleries through interaction with exhibit elements and/or demonstrations.
	+ Demonstrates how an exhibit element works, including, who, what, where, why and how behind the exhibit.
	+ Performs effective and engaging history and science demonstrations.
1. **Department Practices & Procedures**

**Expected Availability:**

All Interpretation Specialists (IS) are expected to be available on a weekly basis between 16-29 hours within the operating hours of the museum.

**Operating Hours:**

1. Monday – Saturday 8:00 am - 5:15 pm, Sunday 12:30 pm - 5:15 pm, & Art Hop Fridays 8:00 am – 9:15 pm
	1. Holidays 12:30 pm – 5:15 pm: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day & Labor Day
	2. Museum is closed: Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
2. IS are scheduled to assist and/or conduct normal floor duties for afterhours events. These events are known at least 2 weeks in advance, and IS staff will be notified prior to being scheduled for this type of shift.
3. IS must be available at *least* 1 weekend shift (Saturday or Sunday) a month.

**Time off Request Procedure:**

**What is a time off request?**

A time off request is exactly what it says: a *request*. All requests submitted by the deadline, set by the Coordinator of Interpretation, will be considered.

**Request Procedures:**

1. Requests are considered on a first come, first served basis. The earlier you get in a request, the higher likelihood it will be approved.
2. During the first week of every month, IS will receive a reminder via their KVCC email from the Coordinator that time off requests for the *following month* are due within a week of the reminder.
	1. Example: The Coordinator will send a reminder to IS the first week of December. Requests for time off *during January* would be due during the following (second) week of December.
3. IS should send their requests via email to both the Museum Support Specialist and the Coordinator of Interpretation.
4. There are certain holidays and other times when multiple requests for the same day(s) are submitted. These requests are taken on a first come, first served basis and will be capped as necessary to ensure staffing needs are met.
5. Extended leave: Multiple weeks (more than 1) requested off in a row will not be automatically granted. The same rules apply in that requests must be made in writing in advance, requests are considered on a first come, first served basis, and staffing needs will be taken into account.

**Switching Shifts:**

1. Once the schedule has been posted and sent out to staff, it is your responsibility to work your shift. If something comes up and you want to switch, it is your responsibility to ask another IS staff member to cover or switch with you.
	1. All shift exchanges must maintain the 29 HRS per week limit.
2. All shift changes must be approved by the Coordinator of Interpretation. This can be done through KVCC email.
3. If this procedure becomes excessive, i.e. switching every single scheduled shift, it will result in disciplinary action.

**Calling in Sick Procedure:**

**If you are ill and cannot work:**

1. Weekdays:
	1. Call the Coordinator of Interpretation **immediately** as soon as you know you will not be in.
		1. Office: 269-373-7959
		2. Cell: 810-553-0137
			1. Text messages are acceptable; Coordinator of Interpretation will reply to ensure message has been delivered.
		3. Alternate emergency: 269-365-5254
2. Weekends or days Coordinator of Interpretation is not available:
	1. Call the AOD on the schedule and the front desk at 269-373-7990.
	2. Email the Coordinator of Interpretation stating that you are ill and cannot work your shift.
	3. Part time staff are not compensated for days absent; time sheets must be adjusted accordingly to reflect actual shifts worked.
3. Absences:
	1. IS staff will be allowed 3 unexcused absences within a 6-month period before disciplinary action is taken. Attendance will be tracked January 1 – June 30 and July 1 – December 31.
		1. Examples of excused absence:
			1. Illness for which a doctor’s note was provided
			2. Family emergency , i.e. death in the family (pre-approval is required)
			3. Switching shifts with a co-worker so your shift is still covered
			4. Conflict with school/class schedule (pre-approval is required)
		2. Examples of unexcused absence:
			1. No call/no show for your scheduled shift
			2. Missing a scheduled shift for which you could not secure coverage from another IS staff member
			3. Illness for which a doctor’s note was not provided
		3. The IS monthly staff meetings that you are scheduled for count as shifts. If you cannot attend the meetings, you must receive written approval from the Coordinator of Interpretation.
4. Tardiness:
	1. IS staff are expected to be on time for a scheduled shift.
	2. If you are running behind for your shift and/or something is preventing you from arriving on time for your scheduled shift, IS staff must notify the Coordinator of Interpretation or AOD as soon as possible.
		1. Examples of tardiness:
			1. Arriving to work after the time you are scheduled
			2. Not checking in on the radio with the Coordinator or AOD by the time you are scheduled
			3. Not being at your assigned station or the Front Desk at your scheduled start time
	3. Chronic tardiness, as with absent procedures, will be the following:
		1. If an IS staff member is tardy (more than 5 minutes past scheduled shift) 3 times within 1 month period, disciplinary action will be taken.

**I acknowledge receiving this document and understand all of the procedures and behaviors expected of me during my employment at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator of Interpretation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

More on part-time staff leave of absence covered in KVCC employee handbook <http://home.kvcc.edu/hr/handbooks-manuals-policies/one_handbook.pdf>

# Dress Code Policy (updated 2016)

The goal of this policy is to ensure the Museum has easily identifiable staff members that project a professional image while at work by being appropriately attired. This policy applies to part time employees.

Staff Members are expected to be neat, clean, and well-groomed while on the job. Clothing must not be a distraction or attract negative attention. It must also be appropriate to the type of work being performed and take into account the expectations of any patrons served.

Any questions regarding this policy should be referred to the supervisor.

**SHIRTS**

* A branded KVM top is required for all staff working with the public (with the exception of Challenger staff working on a mission) and must be the outermost layer at all times. These will be provided by the Museum.
* Summer hands-on t-shirts are appropriate attire during Summer Hands-on days and past event (i.e. Fretboard Festival or hands-on shirt) are appropriate attire on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays an alternate to the uniform shirt.

**BOTTOMS**

* Pants, capri pants, and skirts at least knee-length are acceptable. Those scheduled to be in Children’s Landscape for extended periods of time are asked to refrain from wearing skirts unless leggings are worn beneath.
* It is acceptable to wear jeans, but they must be in good condition, not ripped or tattered. The jeans must also be a solid color, not faded.

**NAME TAGS**

* Magnetic name tag must be worn at all times on the outer piece of clothing. Must be visible by everyone. When using a lanyard or clip there should not be any reference to other organizations.
* Temporary items worn to advertise upcoming special events are allowed until those events have passed.

**FOOTWEAR**

* Comfortable shoes are highly recommended given the amount of time standing and walking the galleries.
* Open toe shoes and flip flops are not allowed while working on the floor with the public. This is a safety precaution to avoid injury.
1. **Assessment**

**Interpretation Specialist Self-Assessment Tool**

Part of the annual assessment for all Interpretation Specialists (6 months for first year hires and 1 year for other staff) will include the following self-assessment. This should be addressed before or after an observation\* session and before meeting with supervisor(s) to review.

**General Competencies (all staff)**

The following three competencies apply to all IS who have worked at the KVM for 6 months or more. Please indicate whether or not you feel you meet these competencies as outlined, explaining why or why not. If you feel there are obstacles to your fulfillment of these expectations, please explain in detail what those are and what solutions you think could be implemented to eliminate those barriers.

Self-Assessment: [G:\Museum\Workarea\Front Desk\Manuals & Procedures\Self-evaluation.docx](file:///G%3A%5CMuseum%5CWorkarea%5CFront%20Desk%5CManuals%20%26%20Procedures%5CSelf-evaluation.docx)

Supervisor Assessment:

Section II Operations Manual, Interpretation and Content Training

**Kalamazoo Valley Community College Mission Statement**

We are committed to enriching the lives of our students and communities through quality educational programs and services.

To accomplish these ends, we will:

* Support student goal achievement through access to learning experiences and assessment.
* Support a balance between a comprehensive curricular base and innovations in education, personal development and technology by strategically utilizing resources.
* Provide curriculum and supportive services relevant to the needs of individuals, enterprise and government.
* Maintain a learning environment built upon the inclusivity of ideas of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds.
* Support economic vitality and stability through development of a skilled local workforce.
* Integrate the components of campus-based instruction, the Groves, Bronson Healthy Living Campus, and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum to support student and community needs.

Adopted:   June 14,  1994
Modified:  October 9, 2001, October 12, 2004

**Core Values**

Caring & Respect, Integrity, Excellence and Quality, Humor and Well-Being, Teamwork and Stewardship

**Kalamazoo Valley Museum Mission Statement**

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum uses its collection and resources to provide its audience with innovative learning experiences, conversation, and community interaction as we examine our past, influence our present, and create our future.

Adopted 2011

**Vision**

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum will be a national model for museum programming, fostering inclusivity, collaboration, and innovative experiential teaching and learning

***Overview of Strategic Initiatives 2012-2017***

This section identifies the six broad strategic initiatives, their connection to the vision and mission of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum and the manner in which the Kalamazoo Valley Museum will measure and report the effectiveness of each overarching initiative.

**Strategic Initiatives**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strategic Initiative  | Rationale | Measurement of Effectiveness |
| 1.) Establish a long-term marketing plan to enhance the visibility of the KVM. | An effective marketing plan ensures that the greater Kalamazoo community is both aware of and able to connect with the vision and mission of the KVM. | Increase visitation at the KVM by 5% per year from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2017.  |
| 2.) Maintain and utilize a representative, authentic collection that is truly reflective of the heritage of the broader audience we serve. |

|  |
| --- |
| Effective collections management, which includes use and preservation, supports the Museum’s mission to provide innovative learning experiences, foster conversations, and encourage community interaction about issues of our past, present and future.  |

 | Increase in the volume of audience access to the collection through such things as in-house collection-based exhibits and on-line web access to the collection; successful refinement of the collection based on an upgraded “Scope of Collection” document: and, finally, growth of “diversity” in the collection as it reflects the broader regional community.  |
| 3.) Select special exhibits and design programming to engage the community in conversation, teaching, and learning. | Special (temporary) exhibits and programming are a critical means by which the KVM can engage the most diverse audiences, ensure repeat visitation, and explore subject areas not easily supported by its collections or permanent exhibits.  | Increase in number of new audiences which will increase annual museum attendance.  |
| 4.) Critically examine permanent exhibits to enhance KVM’s ability to engage the community in conversation, teaching, and learning. |

|  |
| --- |
| One of the Museum’s major resources--its permanent exhibitions -- supports the Museum’s mission to provide innovative learning experiences, foster conversations, and encourage community interaction about issues of our past, present and future.  |

 | Maintain or increase current traffic in the existing permanent exhibits (as opposed to seeing a decline); measure on-going visitation within those spaces by observation, wear & tear, and visitor comments.  |
| 5.) Establish special events programming to engage the community in conversation, teaching, learning, and entertainment. |

|  |
| --- |
| Special events are one of the KVM’s main methods of attracting both new and returning visitors, drawing tens of thousands of people of all ages every year. These events utilize many of the KVM’s unique facilities and resources, such as the MJST, CLC, and Museum collections, and are reliant upon these facilities and resources in creating a memorable experience for event-goers.  |

 | Achieve estimated attendance goals for specific events and/or within specific areas of the museum (MJST, CLC, Planetarium) with end goal to increase overall museum attendance annually for the years in which these events are held. Increase in positive feedback obtained from museum patrons relative to special events programming. |
| 6.) Strengthen connection (beyond administrative) between the KVM and the greater KVCC community. | An increase in KVCC faculty use of the KVM is directly linked to the museum’s educational mission to provide innovative learning experiences, foster conversations, and encourage community interaction about issues of our past, present and future.  | Increase in the number and quality of interactions between KVCC faculty and students and the KVM.  |