



Frequently Asked Questions

Volunteer Docent Training Programme 2010-11

What will I study?

The Docent Training programme prepares Friends of the Museums (FOM) members to guide in one of four museums in Singapore: the Singapore Art Museums (SAM), the Peranakan Museum (TPM), the National Museum of Singapore (NMS), or the Asian Civilizations Museum (ACM). The training programmes include the Foundation Course, which cover the cultures, history, and religions of China, India, the Arab world and Southeast Asia as they relate to the artifacts and exhibits in the museums. In addition, FOM museum guides will study the specific collection of each museum and learn skills for guiding students and the general public. All docents will train to guide the museum's permanent collections and changing special exhibits.

The museums focus on the following areas:

- ◆ **Singapore Art Museum** houses the national art collection of Singapore and has the largest collection of 20th-century Southeast Asian art by a public institution internationally.
- ◆ **Peranakan Museum** showcases the life and rites of a Peranakan family, a unique Chinese-Malay blended tradition found only in Southeast Asia.
- ◆ **National Museum of Singapore** presents the history of Singapore, from the 14th century to the contemporary period, using innovative display and creative possibilities in culture and heritage.
- ◆ **Asian Civilisations Museum** highlights the roots of Singapore's different ethnic groups in the various cultures and civilisations of Asia.

Will I be paid for guiding?

No, this is a voluntary job. FOM members may not receive remuneration for their FOM-related activities.

What is the Foundation Course?

The Foundation Course explores the cultures, history and religions of China, India, the Arab world and Southeast Asia through lectures and selected readings. In addition to these lectures, docents will also learn the practical aspects of overcoming nerves in public speaking, understanding the Singapore school system, and guiding students, among many other topics. Docents training for the Peranakan Museum will finish their training prior to the completion of the Foundation Course, but are strongly encouraged to return for these lectures.

When is the Docent Training Information Meeting?

The Docent Training Information Meeting will take place on May 11, 2010.

This meeting is your opportunity to learn more about FOM's Programme for 2010-11. Representatives from each of the four museums' training teams will be on hand to answer your questions about docent training. You'll also have the opportunity to go on a short tour in one of the museums

When will the course begin?

Docent training will begin September 2010. Training for guiding in the Peranakan Museum will end in December 2010. Training for all other museums ends in March 2010 (exact dates subject to change).

Are there any holidays?

There will be a one week break in October, 4 weeks December/January and one week around Chinese New Year.

What day of the week is training?

Tuesday 8.45am-1:30pm is the primary training day and time; that is when most lectures are given. However, sometimes there may be changes to accommodate the speakers. There are also *optional but strongly recommended additional activities*, such as group field trips and themed gallery tours. You should plan to attend as many of these activities as your schedule permits

How much time does the training take?

With required course lectures, binder readings, research, preparation of gallery talks and tour papers, as well as optional highlight tours and group field trips, this course takes up a lot of time. As FOM museum guides we take our commitment to the museums we serve very seriously. We want to do the best job we can. This is only possible with an intensive training course and an on-going commitment after the course has ended.

What do I have to consider before applying?

Those applying for the course need to carefully consider the time commitment required for all aspects of the training: formal lectures, self-study, research, gallery talk preparation and tour paper preparation. The course is very time-consuming. People who miss more than a week may find it difficult to catch up and therefore it is important to consider your schedule and whether it will prevent you from completing the course.

What happens if I miss a session?

This course takes a large time commitment and by missing a session it can be hard to catch up with the research and preparation for the gallery talks and tour papers. If you know that you will be away for more than one session, consider applying next year.

My English is not very good; can I still be a guide?

All tours are conducted in English. All guides must be proficient English speakers. Many of our guides speak English as a second language and do a fantastic job. You do not need to be a native speaker.

I'm nervous speaking in public; can I learn to guide?

Being a museum guide involves talking to people about the museum and its exhibits. However, it is less like a 'speech' and more like a conversation. During the training you will get lots of practice and advice on how to conduct an effective tour. These specific tips and the regular practice will help you gain confidence and learn this style of public speaking. Go on as many tours as possible before the course begins and you will see that everyone has a different style. We will help you develop yours.

What does it cost?

The costs for 2010-2011 Docent Training Programme are as follows:

Museum	Price	Seniors (age 60+)
Singapore Art Museum	\$500	\$250
Peranakan Museum	\$400	\$200
National Museum of Singapore	\$500	\$250
Asian Civilisations Museum	\$500	\$250

You must be an FOM member in order to be an FOM docent. If you are not currently a member of FOM, you will have to become a member before you can join the course. Annual membership fees are \$60 for an individual (\$25 senior). Joint and family memberships are also available.

Do I get a refund if I sign up for the course, pay the fee and attend a couple of sessions, then decide it's not for me?

No. Once you have been accepted into the Docent Training Programme and paid the fee there are no refunds.

How much work do I have to 'hand in'?

You will be asked to research up to four gallery talks and then present the talks to your peers and trainers. This will form the basis of your tour paper. The tour paper is the "script" of the one-hour tour that you will give to visitors in the museum. The tour paper will demonstrate your knowledge of the museum and the current exhibitions.

What happens after I submit my tour paper?

At the end of the course, one or two experienced FOM docents will read your tour paper and you will receive feedback. Then you will be scheduled to conduct your Mentor Tour. A Mentor Tour is a tour within the museum under the guidance of an experienced FOM docent.

What is my commitment after the course?

When you are accepted in the FOM Docent Training Programme, you will be required to sign a commitment form that says you will **actively guide** (a maximum of four tours each month) for at least one year following the completion of docent training. Of course, you can guide for a longer period of time. Tours include regular and student tours and are scheduled between 9:00 and 4:00 Monday through Friday; in addition, guides may be needed for evening tours.

You also commit to keeping current with the exhibitions in the museums by regularly attending walkthroughs and on-going training programs.

I recently trained to be a docent at a museum (ACM, NMS, SAM or TPM) and have not completed my one-year commitment to guiding there. Can I join another training programme?

All FOM trained guides are required to **actively guide** (up to of four tours each month) for at least one year after the completion of training. Please carefully consider your previous commitment to guide at the ACM, SAM or NMS before you take on the training for another museum.

I already guide in one of Singapore's museums. Must I attend the Foundation Course?

Yes. The Foundation Course is an integral part of the FOM Docent Training Programme 2010-11.

How many people will participate in the training?

The number of trainees is limited and the FOM Docent Training Programme is quite popular. Subject to an interview, we accept trainees on a first come, first serve basis.

Anything else?

You must have regular access to the Internet and your email. Most communications for trainees and existing docents goes through the Internet and email.

How do I sign up?

Complete and send in the FOM Docent Training Application Form. The application form can be downloaded from www.fom.sg, click on "Volunteers", then "FOM Docent Training 2010-11". Spaces are limited so please apply early to avoid disappointment.

Need more information?

Please attend the Public Information Meeting: May 2010

I cannot attend the Public Information Meeting. Can I still join the training?

Yes. Complete and send in the FOM Docent Training Application Form. The application form can be downloaded from www.fom.sg, click on "Volunteers", then "FOM Docent Training 2010-11".

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Please Note: we have made every effort to provide accurate information in this document. However, minor changes may be necessary from time to time due to unforeseen circumstances.