

Frequently Asked Questions Volunteer Docent Training Programme 2023-2024

What is the Volunteer Docent Training Programme?

The docent training programmes are run by FOM volunteers and prepare FOM members to guide visitors in one of 10 museums and heritage institutions in Singapore, as well as 2 outdoor heritage trails. The following museums, heritage institutions and outdoor heritage trails **will** be running a training programme in the 2023-2024 training year:

Dates of upcoming docent training:

Museum	Starts +	End of Training +	Completion of Mentor Tour *
September 2023 start			
ACM	Tue 12 Sept 2023	Apr 2024	May/June 2024
NMS	Tue 12 Sept 2022	Apr 2024	May/June 2024
STPI	Thurs 14 Sept 2023	Dec 2023	Feb/March 2024
MHF/FOM Kampong Gelam Heritage Trail	Thurs 14 Sept 2023	Nov 2023	Jan/Feb 2024
January 2024 start			
IHC	Mon 15 Jan 2024	May 2024	Jun/Jul 2024
CCM	Wed 17 Jan 2024	Mar/Apr 2024	May 2024
URA/FOM Chinatown Heritage Trails	Fri 12 Jan 2024	Mar 2024	Jun 2024

* This date varies as it reflects the completion date (within 3 months from the date of End of Training) of your mentor tour (an actual public tour within the museum/heritage institute or heritage trail).

+ Dates are subject to change.

The following museums, heritage institutions and outdoor heritage trails **will not** be running training in the 2023-2024 training year due to renovations and other reasons.

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall (SYSNMH)	Closing for restoration
Malay Heritage Centre (MHC)	Closed for revamp
Gillman Barracks (GB)	No public training this year
Singapore Art Museum (SAM)	Closed for redevelopment
The Peranakan Museum (TPM)	No public training this year

Breaks:

All official Singapore holidays are recognised by the training teams. In addition, there are no classes during these periods (do check with specific museum team for variations):

October Break	Mon 16 Oct 2023 – Fri 20 Oct 2023
Christmas/Year-End Break	Mon 18 Dec 2023 – Fri 5 Jan 2024
Chinese New Year Break	Fri 9 Feb - Mon 12 Feb 2024*

*Please check individual museum training schedules for specific CNY holidays.

On which days of the week is training held? Dates and times are subject to changes.

ACM: Training days on Tuesday (8:45-13:30) and Friday mornings (10:00-12:00). Occasional field trips on Wednesdays.

NMS: Training days on Tuesdays (8:45-13:30). Field trips on Thursday mornings.

STPI: Training days on Tuesdays and Thursdays (8:45-13:30)

MHF KG: Training days on Tuesdays and Thursdays (8:45-13:30)

IHC: Training days on Mondays (8:45-13:30) and Thursdays (8:45-12:00). Occasional field trips on Wednesdays.

CCM : Training days on Wednesdays (8:30-13:30). Field trips on Fridays.

URA/Chinatown: Training days on Wednesdays (8:30-13:00) and Fridays (9:00-13:00)

Is the training in-person or on Zoom?

Our training programmes will be in-person this year and not conducted via Zoom. Exceptions for Zoom sessions will be to accommodate overseas speakers.

Will I be paid for guiding?

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

What should I take into consideration before applying?

Please consider the time commitment carefully as it will impact your other commitments—to your family (partner, children, perhaps parents), and any professional commitments. The courses are time-consuming. If you fall behind, it is very difficult to catch up. Please consider any other commitments or plans (holidays, family activities etc.) you may have that may prevent you from completing the course.

FOM tours are conducted on weekdays. Do consider if you would be able to commit to this.

Will it take up a lot of my time?

With required course lectures, reading, independent research, the preparation of gallery talks and tour papers, as well as participating in group field trips, you should be prepared to commit a fair amount of time to your training in addition to course attendance. A good comparison is attending a college-level course. Your English language skills, learning style, etc. will all be contributing factors. FOM docents take their commitment very seriously. We want to do the best job we can. This is only possible by fully participating in the training programme.

Can I train in more than one programme?

You may not train at more than one programme at the same time, even if the training days do not overlap and no matter how experienced you already are. Each training programme is different in content and intensive.

English is not my native language. Can I still be a guide?

All lectures and instruction will be in English. All tours are also conducted in English. All guides must be proficient English speakers. However, many of our guides speak English as a second language and do a fantastic job. You do not need to be a native speaker, but consider carefully if this could impact your ability to keep up with the reading and writing of your papers. In addition, think about how comfortable you are presenting in English before you apply.

I have no experience in public speaking. Can I still apply?

Being a museum guide involves talking to people about the museum and its exhibits. It's not about memorising and delivering a prepared speech, but more a conversational presentation based on a well-prepared tour paper. During the training, you will get lots of practice and advice on how to conduct an effective tour. Specific tips, coaching and 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 happens if I miss a session?

Any missed session is very hard to recover from, given the amount of reading, research and preparation for gallery talks and papers. If you know now that you will miss more than two training days, please consider postponing training until a year when you are able to give the commitment required.

You are allowed to miss a maximum of 2 sessions per training programme (or 1 session for the shorter training programmes). Please let the training organisers know of any travel plans as

soon as you can.

How much work do I have to hand in?

All training programmes have weekly reading to do and weekly homework to submit. On top of that, you will be asked to research and write several gallery papers (tour scripts) of varying lengths, which you will then present to your peers and evaluators. These will form the basis of your tour (or final) paper. A tour paper is the spoken script of a one-hour tour that you will give to visitors in the museum. As a guide, you will constantly continue to fine-tune this tour and develop new ones as time goes by. However, this initial tour paper prepares you to be a museum docent. Experienced FOM docents will review your tour paper and work with you to ensure the information is correct, includes the necessary narratives and themes, covers the requisite galleries and has a good flow.

Will there be a test?

There will be ongoing evaluations of your progress. As mentioned above, there will be written papers and spoken presentations which will be peer-evaluated throughout the programme. Only after successfully completing your papers, will you be scheduled to conduct your Mentor Tour. This is an actual public tour, conducted under the observation of an experienced FOM docent who will serve as your mentor. This serves as your final review by your training team. You will only “graduate” as a docent after you clear this mentor tour.

How much are the training course fees?

The training course fees for 2023 -2024 docent training programmes are as follows:

Duration Based	Training Fees *
ACM & NMS	SGD 600
IHC, STPI	SGD 400
CCM, URA	SGD 300
MHF KG	SGD 150

*FOM is run by volunteers. Training fees are utilised for administration, speaker tokens and other training related expenses. At the moment, we do not accept SkillsFuture Credit. We do not offer concessions for seniors over 60 or students.

Must I be an FOM member to train as a docent?

Yes, you must be a member of FOM in order to attend the training programme and eventually guide. If you are not currently a member, you must join FOM before you can join the course. Joint and family memberships are also available. You can sign up for membership and the docent training online via www.fom.sg

Is there a minimum age for trainees?

Yes, you need to be at least 18 years old.

Do I get a refund if I sign up for the course?

No. Once you have paid the fee, there are no refunds.

What is my commitment after the course?

When you are accepted into an FOM docent training programme, you will be required to sign a form that commits you to actively guide a minimum number of tours for one year following the completion of your Mentor Tour. (Please check with the specific training team for exact commitment as this may vary slightly from museum to museum.) The tours include both regular and special tours, for example, students or special needs groups.

You are also expected to join the next training team to help organise and run the next round of docent training.

You also need to commit to continue upskilling and learning by attending refresher courses, lectures and on-going training activities to keep up-to-date.

I recently trained to be a docent at a museum and have not yet completed my one-year commitment to guiding there. Can I join another training programme?

We discourage this as this would impact your involvement in the next training programme or your current tour commitments. You will also need to follow the normal application and interview process and be accepted in the new museum in which you want to train.

How big is each class?

Each programme accepts a limited number of trainees. FOM docent training is popular. All applicants also need to go through an interview before being accepted for training.

Do I need a computer and smartphone?

You must have regular access to a computer, the Internet, a mobile phone and an email address. Virtually all communication for trainees and existing docents is sent or accessed through emails. Training programmes use Google Drive for access to resources and information. You must be comfortable using a computer to access the online information, write your tour papers, submit them via Google Drive, and connect to group websites. We also have Whatsapp chat groups for quick communications during and after training.

How do I sign up?

You can sign up online via our website www.fom.sg under English Docent Training.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

E-mail: training@fom.sg for any questions regarding the docent training programmes.

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