

Frequently Asked Questions Volunteer Docent Training Programme 2024-2025

What is the Volunteer Docent Training Programme?

FOM volunteers guide in 10 museums and heritage institutions as well as 2 outdoor heritage trails in Singapore. Every year, FOM volunteers run training programmes to prepare FOM members to guide visitors at these venues.

The following museums, heritage institutions and outdoor heritage trails **will** be running a training programme in the 2024-2025 training year:

Dates of upcoming docent training:

Museum	Start of Training +	End of Training +	Completion of Mentor Tour *
September 2024 start			
Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM)	Tue 17 Sept 2024	Apr 2025	May/June 2025
National Museum of Singapore (NMS)	Tue 17 Sept 2024	Mar 2025	Apr/May 2025
The Peranakan Museum (TPM)	Tue 17 Sept 2024	Jan 2025	Feb/March 2025
January 2025 start			
Indian Heritage Centre (IHC)	mid-Jan 2025	May 2025	Jun/Jul 2025
Changi Chapel and Museum (CCM)	mid-Jan 2025	Apr 2025	May/Jun 2025
Malay Heritage Foundation-Kampong Gelam Heritage Trail (KGHT)	mid-Jan 2025	Mar 2025	Apr/May 2025

* This date varies according to the completion date of your "graduation tour" (an actual tour, conducted by you, of the museum/heritage institute/heritage trail where you have trained).

+ Dates are subject to change, as training schedules are being finalised.

The following museums, heritage institutions and outdoor heritage trails **will not** be running training in the 2024-25 training year due to renovations and other reasons.

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall (SYSNMH)	Closed for restoration
Malay Heritage Centre (MHC)	Closed for revamp
Gillman Barracks (GB)	No public training
Singapore Art Museum (SAM)	Closed for redevelopment
FOM/URA-Chinatown Heritage Trails (URA-Chinatown)	No training this year
STPI Creative Workshop and Gallery (STPI)	No training this year

Dates of training breaks:

All official Singapore public holidays are observed by the training programmes.

In addition, there will be no classes during the following periods:

October Break	Variable (check with specific programme)
Christmas/Year-End Break	Mon 16 Dec 2024 – Fri 3 Jan 2025
Chinese New Year Break	Between Mon 27 Jan - Fri 31 Jan 2025 (the duration may vary according to the programme)

On which days of the week is training held?

Below are the typical schedules of the programmes. **[NOTE that the days and times are subject to change as schedules are being finalised.]**

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.

TPM: Training days and field trips on Tuesdays and Thursdays (9:00-13:00)

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

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

KGHT: Training days and field trips on Tuesdays and Thursdays (8:45-13:30)

Is the training in-person or on Zoom?

Our training programmes will be in-person and not conducted via Zoom.

Zoom sessions will only be conducted 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?

Docent training programmes are rigorous and require a significant time commitment. It is difficult to catch up with coursework once you fall behind.

Programmes also follow a strict schedule and attendance policy. This may impact plans such as travel, holidays, family activities, etc.

Therefore please consider how participation in a programme will impact your other commitments, whether professional or to your family..

After completion of training, the FOM tours you conduct will be on weekdays, during the day.

Consider whether you will be able to commit to this requirement.

How much of my time will training take up?

Joining a docent training programme is very much like taking a college-level course.

You will be required to attend lectures and field trips, do reading and independent research, complete weekly assignments, and prepare papers and oral presentations.

You will have to adhere to a strict attendance policy and commit a significant amount of time to complete the required work.

As ambassadors for the institutions where we guide, FOM docents take our commitments very seriously.

You will be expected to fully participate in the training programme and make your best effort.

Can I train in more than one programme?

You may not train at more than one programme at a time, even if the training days do not overlap and no matter how experienced you already are. Each training programme is intensive, differs in content, and will require your full attention.

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. Therefore you will need to be a proficient speaker of English.

You do not need to be a native speaker: many of our guides speak English as a second language and do a fantastic job.

However, before you apply, you should consider whether your English is proficient enough to keep up with the course requirements for reading, writing, and oral presentations.

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

You do not need to have prior experience in public speaking.

However, being a guide means that you will be speaking to groups of visitors, telling them about a museum or trail and its exhibits or places of interest.

You will not be memorising and delivering a prepared speech.

Rather, you will present information in a conversational style, based on information that you have learned and internalised during your training.

FOM docent training programmes not only involve learning content but also learning how to present the content in a confident and effective way during a tour.

During training, you will get a great deal of practice in oral presentation. You will receive feedback to help you develop and improve your style. You will also have the opportunity to follow and learn from tours conducted by experienced docents.

It is highly recommended that - before joining a docent training programme - you follow FOM tours in the institution where you plan to apply.

What happens if I miss a session?

It is inadvisable to miss training sessions.

FOM docent training programmes involve weekly informational lectures, reading, research and assignments, as well as other periodic presentations.

It is very difficult to make up for missed sessions and catch up on missed assignments.

Our programmes have strict attendance policies. You may not miss more than 1 to 2 sessions, depending on the programme.

Consider your schedule and any upcoming travel plans before applying to our programmes.

If you already know that you may have to miss more than 2 sessions, consider postponing your application until a time when you know that you can fully commit to the attendance requirements.

How much work do I have to hand in?

All training programmes require weekly submission of homework.

In addition, depending on the programme, you will need to periodically submit papers (in the form of a tour script), work with a team of fellow-trainees to present these papers, and/or present your independent research on a given topic.

As a graduation requirement, all programmes require you to submit a final paper in the form of a tour script, for the public tour that you will ultimately conduct. You will have to present this script in the form of a tour. Depending on the programme, the tour will last between 1 to 2 hours, and will be conducted either as a public tour or as a tour for your fellow trainees and training team.

This will be your "graduation tour."

Will there be a test?

At every stage, the work that you submit will be reviewed and evaluated by experienced FOM docents. They will provide you with feedback to ensure that your information is accurate and to help you to develop the skills necessary to conduct a public tour.

You must complete each stage of training in a satisfactory manner in order to move on to the next stage.

Your final tour script and "graduation tour," as mentioned above, are known as the "Mentor Paper" and "Mentor Tour."

This final stage of training takes place after the classroom portion of training ends ("End of Training"). You will be assigned an experienced FOM docent as a mentor who will guide your work. When your Mentor Paper has been deemed satisfactory you will be allowed to schedule your Mentor Tour.

Upon satisfactory completion of the Mentor Tour (which will be observed by your mentor), you will graduate and be considered a fully fledged FOM guide, or docent.

The Mentor Tour must be completed within 3 months of the End of Training date.

How much are the training course fees?

The training course fees for 2024 -2025 docent training programmes are as follows:

Programme	Training Fees *
ACM	SGD 600
NMS	SGD 600
TPM	SGD 400
IHC	SGD 400
CCM	SGD 300
MHF KGHT	SGD 200

*FOM is run by volunteers. Training fees are utilised for such needs as administration, tokens of appreciation for speakers, training related expenses (e.g. resources, field trips), etc. At the moment, we do not accept SkillsFuture Credit. We do not offer concessions for seniors over 60 or for students.

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

Yes, you must be a member of FOM in order to join a training programme and eventually to guide. You do not need to be a member to apply. However, once you receive the acceptance email, you must obtain membership before you can join a training programme. You can sign up for membership and apply for docent training online via www.fom.sg

Is there a minimum age for trainees?

Yes, you need to be at least 21 years old.

Do I get a refund if I sign up for the course and change my mind?

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

What is my commitment after the course?

Once you complete an FOM docent training programme and pass your Mentor Tour, you will be required to actively guide a minimum number of tours in the first year.

The number of tours may vary slightly according to the museum or trail and may include both regular and special tours, for example student tours or tours for special needs groups. Please check with your training team for specific information.

You will be required to join the next training team to organise and run the next round of docent training for the museum or trail where you have trained.

As a docent, you should do your best to remain up-to-date by attending lectures and on-going training activities and by keeping abreast of events and changes at the institutions where you guide.

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

We discourage joining another training programme when you have not yet completed all the requirements associated with the previous one.

Meeting guiding and training team commitments requires time and effort. This will impact your ability to satisfactorily complete the work required for another training programme.

I am already a docent at a museum/heritage institution/heritage trail and have completed my post-training commitments. Can I join another training programme?

Yes. Like any other applicant, you will need to follow the normal application and interview process to be accepted into another training programme.

What is the application process?

Once applications open on **7th May 2024**, you will find the application form online via our website www.fom.sg under English Docent Training.

Complete and submit the form for review by the Coheads of Training for the programme you wish to join.

If you are an eligible candidate, they will contact you to set up a date for an interview. All candidates are required to go through the interview process.

Admission to programmes is not on a first-come-first-served basis

If you are admitted into a programme, you will need to obtain FOM membership (if not already a member) and pay the training fee in order to be confirmed.

Do I need a computer and smartphone?

Yes. You must have regular access to a computer, the Internet, a mobile phone and an email account. These will be the basic tools used in training and for communication.

In addition, training programmes use Google Drive for access to resources and information.

In programmes where you present independent research, you will need to be able to prepare a simple slideshow.

You will also need to join Whatsapp chat groups for quick communications during and after 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 occur as training schedules are finalised, or due to unforeseen circumstances.