



University Library System Archives & Special Collections GSA, 2023-2024

Overview

Archives & Special Collections Graduate Student Assistants (GSA) are placed within the University Library System's Archives & Special Collections (A&SC) during the fall and spring terms of an academic year. In this program, the GSA will gain experience in the skills of an archivist, rare book librarian, or curator of distinctive collections through project-based work and make a public presentation of their work. As time permits, the GSA will also have the opportunity to gain experience working with faculty and students as part of A&SC's instruction efforts with undergraduate courses as well as design and install both physical and digital exhibits.

Blending experiential learning and professional development, the A&SC GSA is intended to prepare students for success in archives and special collection careers, both in the academy and beyond.

Details

The appointment requires a commitment of effort up to but not exceeding 20 hours a week. This appointment will be conducted on-site, in the A&SC Hillman Library location and/or Thomas Boulevard, to the extent permitted by general university guidance; if in-person operations are restricted, this appointment may be conducted partially or fully remote, as appropriate.

The GSA stipend is at the current level of a TA or TF.

The specific work of a GSA will be planned in cooperation between the candidate and A&SC staff based on the match between the graduate student's interests in archives and special collections and the library's distinctive collections, services, and existing projects. The GSA will be paired with at least one existing Archives & Special Collections' project based on interest, need, and available resources. The nature of this work will vary, but it is intended to allow the GSA to make a robust connection to the team and work on an ongoing project.

The ULS is committed to proper credit and attribution for all who work on its projects and within its departments. At a minimum, GSAs will receive public credit and recognition as contributors to these projects. Where GSA contributions are more specialized and/or independent, the GSA will receive public credit and recognition as team-member and/or (co-)author.

For new GSAs, and as needed, A&SC staff will provide individual or small-group training on foundational archival theory and practice, including:

- Building donor relationships
- Accessioning and performing preservation assessments of archival collections
- Performing arrangement and description, including working with ArchivesSpace
- Curating blended exhibits that showcase physical and digital items

- Serving on the reference desk or using online tools to help researchers
- Selecting, preparing and digitizing collections for online access
- Ingesting and appraising born-digital items/collections
- Participating in lesson planning, collection curation, in-class assignment design, and instruction for classes using primary sources
- Outreach and promotion of collections, including social media
- Partnering with Pitt Community Engagement Centers to perform community outreach

Based on specific project work, the GSA will also continue training, both directed and self-guided, on areas of specialization. These may include:

- Digital preservation
- Manuscript and/or audio-video transcription practices
- Digital/physical exhibits and storytelling
- Arrangement and description best practices
- hOCR applicability for handwritten manuscripts
- Approaches to synchronous and asynchronous modalities for primary source instruction
- Data analysis to communicate value of A&SC services

Sample Projects and Supporting Resources

Sample Projects:

- Ingesting electronic records in digital preservation system for faculty papers
- Crowdsourcing of transcriptions of digitized archival manuscript or AV materials
- Designing Stephen Foster Digital Library, Center for American Music
- Exploring enhancement tools for digital objects for the visually impaired
- Creating online instruction and lesson plans for K-12 teachers using Historic Pittsburgh
- Coordinating teams of undergraduate students with projects (e.g. large collection digitization prep or processing projects)
- Creating Audio/Video transcriptions

Supporting Resources:

- Digitization lab comprising 6 state-of-the-art scanners capable of digitizing 35mm slides up to 35"x50" maps
- Preservation lab consisting of tools, equipment and material to address the conservation of analog items
- Public gallery space consisting of 8 standalone vitrines and 6 built-in cases
- Digital wall (5'x20') for public interaction with digitized items from ULS distinctive collections
- Instruction room dedicated for working with primary resources for class visits
- Processing space for preparing collections for research access
- Robust digital library infrastructure supporting online and open access to digitized primary sources from A&SC and partner collections: Historic Pittsburgh (<https://historicpittsburgh.org/>), Documenting Pitt (<https://documenting.pitt.edu/>), and ULS Digital Collections (<https://digital.library.pitt.edu/>)

Eligibility

- Ph.D students in the humanities or humanistic social sciences in the University of Pittsburgh's Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.
- Completed at least two full semesters of graduate coursework.
- Must be able to commit up to but not exceeding 20 hours of effort a week during the fall and spring terms
- No prior archival experience required.
- Complete GSA application, which consists of a letter of interest, a CV, and any other relevant materials (e.g. prior archival work; current archival projects, etc.), if applicable.

Email your questions and application to:

Ed Galloway, edwardg@pitt.edu.

For fullest consideration, please submit your application by Friday, March 31, 2023.