



### Job description: General Assistant

Job title	General Assistant
Reporting to	Catering Manager
Key responsibilities	Support the whole Chawton House operation with a combination of front of house, retail, tea room, events, collections and administrative duties.
Hours	Casual contract with no set hours because opening hours change seasonally throughout the year.  Evening and weekend working will be required.
Salary	£6.50 (16/17 years old) £7.50 (18-21 years old) £8.36 (21 and 22 years old) £8.91 (23 years old and over)
Location	Chawton House, Alton
Duration	Ongoing, immediate start

Chawton House is an historic house and estate once owned by Jane Austen's brother Edward Austen Knight and frequented by his sister who lived in a cottage he owned close by. It is home to two nationally significant collections: one of women's writing (1600 – c.1830) and one of the conjoined remainders of the libraries of the Knight family from Chawton House and Godmersham Park. The House is set in over 250 acres of the South Downs National Park, including a formal garden with a terrace designed by Edwin Lutyens, walled gardens and wilderness that are open to visitors.

The charitable objectives of Chawton House are to preserve the House and grounds for the benefit of the public, and to promote the study of early women's writing. Having operated as an academic library until 2015, Chawton House is now open to the public seven days a week, has a lively events and exhibition programme, Old Kitchen Tea Room and shop, and is supported by a 60+-strong volunteer team.

Since 2018, Chawton House has re-invented itself to be a self-sustaining independent heritage and literary charity. We are part way through transforming Chawton House to open up the house, estate and collection to a growing and more diverse audience,



support creative practice, promote the study of women's writing, develop outdoor spaces to encourage public engagement and biodiversity, and connect closely with our local communities. During the Covid crisis, the organisation diversified rapidly, developing a new local audience whilst creating, from scratch, a vibrant digital programme attracting participants from across the world.

### **Purpose of the role**

The General Assistants are at the heart of everything Chawton House does. The team supports every area of the organisation's operation, from working in the popular tea rooms to front of house, events, marketing and administrative support for the Deputy Director and Chief Executive. All General Assistants are trained as baristas, in food hygiene, first aid, front of house and basic collections care. As Chawton House grows and diversifies, the General Assistants will continue to support these new areas and have the opportunity to develop their individual areas of interest (with the relevant training).

### **Key areas of responsibility**

- Support the whole Chawton House operation with a combination of front of house, retail, tea room, events, collections and administrative duties.
- Work as a Tea Room Assistant in the Courtyard and Old Kitchen Tea Rooms.
- Retail assistant in the Chawton House shop.
- Opening and closing the House at the start and end of opening.
- Staff the Tea Shed/Ticket Office and be the first point of contact for visitors to Chawton House.
- Support the Curator and Collections Manager with basic collections care.
- Flexible post to provide out-of-hours cover for private hire and other events.
- Administrative, marketing and events support
- Assistance with projects, digital activity and public engagement.

*This job description is not all encompassing. Over time the emphasis may alter without changing the general character of the role. Duties will be periodically reviewed with the post holder, and revised and updated in consultation if required.*

### **Benefits**

You are entitled to the following employee benefits:

- 15 % staff discount in the café and shop
- Access to professional development opportunities
- Free entry to other Historic Houses members and use of *Gardeners World* 2for1 pass.



### Personal specification

Essential criteria	Assessed at application	Assessed at interview
Good understanding of excellent customer experience	x	x
Physically fit to do lifting and moving of displays, tables, chairs etc		x
Welcoming and helpful manner		x
Flexibility to attend out of hours events at short notice and when necessary	x	
Willingness to working flexibly on a range of tasks across a busy historic house		x
Pleasant and helpful manner which will make visitors feel welcome		x
Remains calm and effective in a fast-paced environment	x	x
Good oral and written communication skills	x	x
Independent worker who is flexible and will work as part of a team	x	x
Willingness to learn new skills and processes	x	x
<b>Desirable criteria</b>		
Experience of working or volunteering in a leisure, hospitality, culture or heritage organisation	x	
Work or voluntary experience of a customer-facing role	x	

**COVID-19 considerations:** All employees are required to wear a face covering whilst moving around the House.