



PHILIP J. CURRIE
DINOSAUR MUSEUM

SUMMER PALAEOLOGY TECHNICIAN & COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT

The Summer Palaeontology Technician and Collections Assistant will serve a specific role in the research and education mandate of the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum by preparing, conserving, and cataloguing fossil material for use in research and education, recruiting and supervising volunteers with the aid of other museum staff, assisting in the installation of gallery displays, assisting in sending and receiving of object loans and donations, and assisting in organizing and stocking the fossil preparation lab and collections of the museum. The Summer Palaeontology Technician and Collections Assistant will be based at the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum, primarily in the fossil preparation lab and collections areas. Over the past years, fossil collections in the region has dramatically increased with an increased research focus in the area, resulting in hundreds of unprepared fossils currently housed at the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum currently unavailable for research or education.



Under the supervision of the museum's Assistant Curator, the Summer Palaeontology Technician and Collections Assistant will prepare and conserve these locally collected fossils and ensure specimens are appropriately stored in a condition that can be maintained in perpetuity. This work will be carried out using widely accepted palaeontological techniques. The Summer Palaeontology Technician and Collections Assistant will also assist in directly overseeing and working with volunteers in the museum's fossil preparation volunteer program. This role will involve helping to teach volunteers appropriate palaeontological techniques and the proper use and maintenance of tools and supplies. The position will also catalogue, label, and organize prepared fossils using the museum's database system. The collections program used to catalogue specimens is PastPerfect. As necessary, loan material will be processed and specimens will be readied for display in the museum's galleries.



This position will be very important for the PJCDM by assisting it to fulfill its mission and a number of its objectives, including:

1. To promote an understanding of palaeontology within the Peace Region of Alberta by using fossils to educate students and the public.
2. To promote scientific research of palaeontology resources in the Peace Region.
3. To preserve and protect palaeontological resources as historical resources for future generations.

This position will allow the museum to have this section of the museum staffed seven days per week during the summer even while some museum staff are outside the museum actively conducting palaeontological fieldwork. The specimens prepared by Palaeontology Technician and volunteers will be important in new research projects in the area carried out by the museum's Assistant Curator.

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These projects will require large samples of fossils to be collected, prepared, and made available to study.

Prepared specimens will also be available to external researchers and museum cross-institutional collaborators, and the position will work closely with visiting scientists studying the material.

The employee will gain invaluable work experience, practical skills for palaeontology (cleaning, gluing, labelling, preparation), as well as specific collections management skills .



(storage and cataloguing with the PastPerfect program). Additional skills such as teamwork, initiative, and problem solving will be fostered in the museum environment

Local communities and tourists will benefit from the work completed by the Summer Palaeontology Technician and Collections Assistant, as the work in the prep lab will be visible from the gallery to visitors to the museum. In 2020, a lab tour was introduced. This was a popular addition, and this position will assist in the tours. Catalogued fossils in our collection will be used for educational, display, and interpretive purposes in the museum, as well as in the community at large, giving families an opportunity to experience, to understand, to learn, and to appreciate Alberta's rich palaeontological heritage and the importance of protecting and preserving it for future generations.

The position will also educate the public through the mentorship and assistance of volunteers in the prep lab.



Measurable outcomes: The most prominent measurable outcome of the position will be the preparation, cataloguing, and storage of fossil specimens. Based on previous summer student work in the fossil preparation lab, ideally four major fossil bone elements can be completed over the summer, not including fossils prepared by volunteers. Another major measurable outcome will be the number of volunteers and how many days out of the summer volunteers spend their time in the lab. During the summer months, volunteer activity in the preparation lab slows, and the position will take active steps to engage the volunteers and maintain attendance through the summer. To be considered a success, this position will recruit at least two new volunteers over the summer, and at least one volunteer will visit the lab on weekends.

Description of tasks:

1. Prepare (stabilize and clean) dinosaur fossils for study or display at the museum.
2. Create supports for the long-term storage of specimens.
3. Teach volunteers in the preparation lab proper palaeontological preparation skills.



4. Assist volunteers in their fossil preparation projects.
5. Document volunteer hours.
6. Document specimen treatment (including adhesives, style of preparation, and preparator).
7. Learn how specimen information is retained with specimens and transferred to the collection for cataloguing.
8. Organize preparation projects in collections, and keep organized through preparation to cataloguing.
9. Learn the process involved in cataloguing fossils.
10. Learn how to photograph fossils for a catalogue.
11. Learn how to label fossils for a catalogue.
12. Learn how to catalogue a fossil collection using database software.
13. Learn standards and procedures for best practice in collections management.
14. Gain an understanding of how a museum collection functions.
15. Learn how to process incoming and outgoing object loans.
16. Learn how objects are supported and protected while on display.



Work plan: The student will usually work Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm and Friday from 12:00 to 8:00 pm. During training, the student will work Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm until the week of May 25 when they will switch to their regular schedule. The first two days will involve general orientation to the museum and to the position expectations. The employee will be given necessary paperwork, shown around the facility, shown workplace safety features, introduced to staff and volunteers, and given training with required tools, equipment, work station, and software. The remainder of the position will be spent in the preparation lab area and collections, preparing and cataloguing fossils and assisting volunteers. A typical work day may involve

checking staff emails, readying work tools, checking in with their supervisor on project progress & priorities, preparing fossil specimens, constructing fossil supports for storage, welcoming and setting up volunteers in the lab, supervising volunteers, logging volunteer hours, finished prepared specimens, photographing & cataloguing finished specimens, and assisting with other tasks as necessary such as museum events.



Week-by-week, the supervisor will assess whether the student is progressing at a reasonable rate to completely prepare four specimens, recruit new volunteers, and supervise volunteers on all days of the work week. As every volunteer and fossil specimen is different, weekly goals are difficult to predict ahead of time, but will be assessed as the summer progresses. Finally, the student will meet with their supervisor in the last week of the program to go over things that went well, things that did not go well, and ways to improve the project for next year for the staff, student, and volunteers.

Employability skills to be gained (marketable skills):

This job opportunity offers excellent career-related work experience and skill development for students. Much of the work experience and skills developed in this position are only a minor part of any related post-secondary degree education, but are best-acquired by on-the-job training and regular first-hand experience. These experiences are extremely beneficial to any student looking to work in a natural history field, and more specifically in a museum or university environment and/or the field of palaeontology.



Through work in the lab, students will be responsible for their own projects as well as overseeing the lab in the absence of more senior staff. They will act independently without constant supervision but also as part of a team working to fulfill the mandate of the fossil preparation lab and collections. They will demonstrate a positive attitude and develop communication skills as they work to supervise volunteers in the lab. Each fossil brings its own unique set of challenges to preparation, and the student will have to adapt their strategies and solve a variety of problems depending on the preservation of the fossil and the desired finished state of the specimen. Metadata of specimens will be recorded and managed in our cataloguing software, PastPerfect, which the student will become familiar with. Potential problems may arise with fossil preparation, identification, labelling, and cataloguing, such as missing data, improper labelling, or missing specimens. The employee will gain skills involved in assessing and identifying these problems, and coming up with solutions and ways to improve the process.



Students will learn lab safety techniques for work with tools and equipment and become familiar with the necessary personal protective equipment, as well as use this information to teach new volunteers in the lab. All of these tasks are highly specialized in nature and will be a boon to students pursuing employment in palaeontology or other museum-focused fields.

The ideal candidate must have the following qualities:

1. Currently attending and will be returning to post-secondary education for a degree in palaeontology, geology, archaeology, museum studies, zoology, biology, science, fine arts, design, arts, architecture, engineering, or equivalent.
2. Experience preparing and/or handling fossils in a lab setting.
3. Knowledgeable or interested in Alberta's palaeontology, geology, and/or natural history.
4. Attention to detail, good organizational skills, and the ability to work independently on focussed tasks.
5. Fluent in written and spoken English.



6. Basic computer and technology skills, including experience using Microsoft Excel.
7. The ability to lift moderately heavy objects.

Preference will be given to candidates who have:

1. Extensive fossil preparation experience in a lab setting.
2. Supervision experience.
3. Experience with collection database software.

We are an equal opportunity employer, and any eligible person is welcome to apply for this position. Visit the following website to register in the YCW on-line candidate inventory, <https://young-canada-works.canada.ca>.

Application deadline: Sunday, April 6th.

**Please email your cover letter and resume to the following address:
hr@dinomuseum.ca**