The skills programme breaking down barriers to



Qualifications, experience, the financial ability to undertake unpaid work. These are the traditional barriers to working in the museum sector being broken down thanks to National Lottery funding.

The Skills for Success programme, led by Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has been turning the traditional recruitment processes on its head to build a workforce that better represents communities.

The programme offered work-based experience at museums across Scotland and a recognised qualification to non-graduates from diverse backgrounds. It recruited based on personal qualities rather than qualifications and the paid placements meant those financially unable to do unpaid work could take part.

Twenty one people have just successfully completed the scheme at museums across Scotland. Some are staying within the museum sector while others are taking their transferable skills and valuable experience on to new career paths.

Watch the video below to hear from three of Scotland's newest musuem employees – Ellen, Elliot and Sarah – as they share their experiences and hopes for the future:

Ellen’s story – a career not just a job

Ellen Pryde saw having a university degree as key to getting a job in the museum sector, until she joined Skills for Success and realised how valuable her contribution was.

She said: “Usually people who work in this sort of career have been to university, but bringing someone like me in is a fresh pair of eyes and a different perspective.”

Ellen completed her training at the Scottish Crannog Centre, turning her hand to tour guiding, marketing, curating and Iron Age tasks. During the year she went from Trainee to Duty Manager and will now stay on at the Centre in a marketing and engagement role.

“I feel like I’ve achieved quite a lot and I’ve done something quite valuable. I have a qualification now to back that up. This has been a really good opportunity to find a career, rather than just a job.”

Elliot’s story – drive and motivation



Elliot Melton

Elliot Melton’s involvement in Skills for Success has been an incredible personal journey, and helped him discover his passion. Elliot spent his time at the Scottish Maritime Museum as a Learning and Access Trainee.

He said: “I feel like I’ve been able to work upon myself and increase some of the skills I have, which I’ll be able to use in my future.”

Elliot will continue working at the museum in Visitor Services and now has a clear ambition for his future career.

“I definitely want to pursue an educational career. I know what I want to do and I know what I need to do. I feel like the programme has given me the drive and motivation to go get it.”

Sarah’s story – an opportunity of a lifetime



Sarah Leal

Sarah Leal thought working in the museum sector was out of her reach. So when she discovered Skills for Success she saw it as an "opportunity of lifetime" and applied to work with Glasgow Museums as an Outreach and Volunteering Trainee.

She said: “Having this opportunity for non-graduates has given me the accessibility to reach such jobs that are so interesting to me, working with heritage and museums. This time last year I never would have thought of applying for such jobs.”

Now she has finished the scheme, Sarah has successfully secured a job as Learning Assistant at Kelvin Hall.

Sarah added: “It has given me the opportunity to be the person I wanted to be. I think it’s going to change my life.”



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A blog by Rosie Gibson, The National Lottery Heritage Fund Social Media Manager

Ways to meaningfully involve young people in heritage