

The Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection – new Trustees

The Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection is seeking three new Trustees to replace retiring Trustees to contribute, at a strategic level, to the care, promotion and development of the world class Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons of England and its collections.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection was established in 1799 to oversee the care of the comparative anatomy and pathology collections and related objects and papers of 18th century anatomist and surgeon John Hunter.

Hunter's collection was purchased by the British Government, for the benefit of the public, and given into the care of the Company of Surgeons (now the Royal College of Surgeons of England). The Hunterian Museum first opened at the Royal College of Surgeons in 1813 and has been one of the world's most influential medical and natural history collections for over 200 years.

The Board is independent of the College but works closely with it. The Board has several ex-officio Trustees and up to 14 active Trustees, of whom around half are surgeons who are Members and Fellows of the College.

The Hunterian Museum and its collections

Following a six-year closure, the Hunterian Museum reopened to the public, free of charge, at the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCSEng) in Lincoln's Inn Fields in May 2023. The Museum traces the art and science of surgery from ancient times to the present day, and includes over 2,000 human and non-human specimens from Hunter's 18th century museum collection.

The Museum is part of the RCSEng's Museums Department which operates the Hunterian Museum and a separate Anatomy and Pathology Museum, for use by healthcare professionals and students only. The Hunterian Museum is an Arts Council of England Accredited Museum and has designated collection status.

In the 1950s the Board of Trustees was given formal oversight by RCSEng of specimens and objects added to the Hunterian Museum since 1799, with the exception of human anatomy and pathology specimens less than 100 years old, which come under the Human Tissue Act legislation. This included the museum collection of the Odontological Society of Great Britain, donated to RCSEng in 1941.

There are around 70,000 specimens and objects in RCSEng's Museums collections with approximately 40% kept at off site stores. The long-term care of the collections stored off site will be the focus of a major collections project in the next three years.

The roles of a Trustee

As a member of the Hunterian Collection Board of Trustees you will be responsible for the preservation and maintenance of the Collection. In addition you will have a critical role in the development of one of the world's leading medical museums at a time of re-evaluation and change for museums worldwide, especially those with foundations in the period of Western colonial growth and enlightenment science.

With the Hunterian Museum newly opened, a priority now is to deliver audience engagement activities befitting a 21st century museum.

The Board of Trustees and RCSEng Museums is committed to addressing issues of decolonisation, defined by the Museums Association as 'a long-term process that seeks to recognise the integral role of empire in museums from their creation to the present day'.

An ongoing programme called Hunterian Provocations will be launched in the Spring of 2024. This is a new collaborative programme of research, workshops, exhibitions and events covering critical themes of: decolonisation, repatriation, the environment and sustainability, the ethics of display, representation of lived experience, and inclusion and diversity in the history of surgery.

New formal learning programmes are in the planning stage and will include sessions to support GCSE, A Level and BTEC courses in: History of Medicine and Science, Biology, Art, English Literature, Natural History and Healthcare.

The Hunterian Museum also supports the strategic aims of RCSEng, most especially in inspiring young people, whatever their economic, social or heritage background, to consider careers in surgery and related bio-medical sciences.

Trustee profile

The Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection is seeking three non-surgical Board Members with particular skills, knowledge and experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Experience at a senior level of museum/art collections conservation
- Experience at a senior level of museum collections management
- Experience at a senior level in museum/cultural heritage learning and engagement
- Experience at a senior level in research and/or teaching in comparative anatomy

- Experience as an academic, with specific interest and knowledge of British colonial history and the history of science, researching and presenting documentary films.

Time commitment

The Trustees meet four times a year (February, April, July, October) usually at the Royal College of Surgeons of England in Lincoln's Inn Fields where the Hunterian Museum is located. The term of office of a Trustee is five years, with possible re-election for one further term of five years.

The Board's workings are governed by the Rules of the Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection, which will be sent to all candidates expressing an interest in the Trustee positions.

The posts are voluntary but travel and subsistence expenses in line with the expenses policy of RCSEng are paid.

Diversity

The Board of Trustees wishes to reflect the diversity within the UK population and applications are particularly welcome from women, people from Black, Asian and Ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities.

A Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) is in place for disabled candidates who meet the assessment criteria.

How to apply and the appointment process

Please send a letter of interest (no more than two pages of A4) and a CV to dawn.kemp@rcseng.ac.uk, Secretary to the Board of Trustees, by Sunday 14 January 2024.

The application and selection process will be fair and transparent. A sub-group of the Trustees will shortlist and interview candidates, and present their selection to the main Board for approval. Appointments are subject to pre-appointment checks.

Interviews will be held in January/February 2024 for formal appointment during 2024.

Further information

About the Hunterian Museum: www.hunterianmuseum.org.uk

If you have any queries regarding the application process, would like to speak to a serving Trustee or require information in an alternative format, please contact dawn.kemp@rcseng.ac.uk

***The Royal College of Surgeons of England**

The Royal College of Surgeons of England is a membership organisation. It provides world-class education, assessment and development to 30,000 surgeons, dental professionals and members of the wider surgical and dental care teams, at all stages of their career world-wide. Its vision is to see excellent surgical care for everyone by setting professional standards, facilitating research and championing the best outcomes for patients.