



Career Stages for Museum Professionals Professional Development Map

Entry

Definition: This person is typically new to the museum field with little and/or no prior education or experience in a related field. They do not yet have an understanding of current theories and standards in museum practice as codified in the Alberta Museums Association's (AMA) *Standard Practices Handbook for Museums, 3rd Ed.*

Characteristics: The person in this phase typically has some background knowledge but very little or no practical museum experience. Any experience may be area-specific, from a different background, or possibly from another unrelated discipline.

Emerging

Definition: This person generally has between three to five years of experience in the museum field and has an understanding of current theories and standards in museum practice as it relates to the AMA's *Standard Practices Handbook for Museums, 3rd Ed.*

Characteristics: The person in this phase typically has limited theoretical and / or practical experience. They may be a recent graduate of relevant educational programs, such as the AMA's Certificate in Museum Studies, a practical training degree in a related field, or an equivalent. They may also pursue additional professional development through participation on a grants jury or as a committee member.

Mid-Career

Definition: This person generally has five to twelve years of museum experience. They have a solid understanding of current theories and standards in museum practice.

Characteristics: The person in this phase typically pursues their professional development by attending conferences and other short-term opportunities. They have committee experience, present papers at conferences and similar opportunities, and contribute to the body of knowledge around museum theory and practice. They may see volunteerism or knowledge development at an advanced level as part of their professional development.

Established

Definition: This person generally has twelve to twenty-five years of museum experience and is in a mid-level to senior role within an organization.

Characteristics: The person in this phase tends to be confident in their knowledge and experience. From this stability comes a shift from learning to sharing, an interest in offering mentorship, instructing, and presenting. They pursue their own professional development by training in specific disciplines as well as by peer reviewing articles, being on complex committees (e.g., the AMA's Annual Conference Program Committee and Recognized Museum Program Review Panel). They tend to be thinkers and delegators.

Senior

Definition: This person has twenty or more years of experience.

Characteristics: Typically this person is in senior management or is the head of an organization. This is a reflective career stage in which they tend to actively contribute to their community by publishing and by offering information based on their experience. They are seen as an authority in their area of expertise, serve on boards of other non-profits, and give lectures and keynote presentations. They pursue professional development through short-term targeted opportunities.