

Frequently Asked Questions or What Every Docent Should Know!

For new docents (and reminders for long time docents): After two years of training, you now have a lot of things to look forward to. First of all, you finally lose the infamous DIT/DOT nickname!

So what do you do now?

Many of you wonder how you will spend Mondays. In non-training class years, continuing education activities are offered for Docents on Mondays. Otherwise, they are Wednesday afternoon or early Thursday morning.

Where do you start?

Sign up for tours. Stop in the office and sign up on the calendar in the copier room. If you can't come in, look for weekly emails from the Education Department and reply by email. Tours are available on a first come first serve basis.

Please do not expect staff to call you each week. There are over one hundred docents to call and often seventy-five slots to fill each week. That is just too many phone calls! If you do receive a desperate call or email – respond ASAP with a yes or no.

What tours should I sign up for?

Whatever appeals to you. Start with the theme and age group where you are comfortable and then expand. Try out everything soon (before you forget the information).

How many tours should I sign up for?

The Education Department plans on each docent conducting at least **one tour per week**, or an average of 52 tours every year. Some weeks there are an incredible number of tours and docents are needed for more than one tour....this balances out with those weeks when you cannot do tours (when you are traveling, sick or entertaining visitors.) Do more than one tour a day only if you have the energy. Do several a week when we are busy so you can enjoy time off later.

Do I have to do every kind of tour?

All docents have been trained to do all of the tours for all ages. Tours are available to docents on a first come first serve basis, so sign up early if you want your favorite theme and favorite age group.

How do I know I have a tour to do?

Be sure you write down your choice on your own calendar immediately; if you don't show up a fellow docent will have to take his/her group as well as yours. We cannot call with reminders.

What if I see a tour listed that I don't recognize?

There is a binder in the Docent Room with many of the tours outlined and another with some Ambassador tour material. If it is a new tour there will be a Continuing Education session to plan out the tour. Sometimes there are requests for special tours that the Department feels are easily accommodated without special training and those are listed. Please ask a staff member to clarify those tours.

Following another docent is another way to learn about a tour. Please contact that docent before the day to make arrangements.

What if I wish to bring a group of friends on a tour?

Scheduled tours are generally for groups of ten or more and must be arranged at least two weeks in advance with the Education office. If a docent wishes to schedule a tour for family and/or friends, she/he must schedule it with Sabrina. (And, you get credit toward the 52 tour per year expectation.)

What do I do when I have company or travel?

Let the Education Department know the dates you are unavailable so staff doesn't leave dozens of phone messages or mail out flyers trying to find you when you are away.

What if I didn't complete the Docent Training Course?

Some DOTs missed parts of the training. The Curator is happy to let these trainees extend their training so they can complete the course as long as they continue to do tours of the areas in which they have been trained. Docents who completed the first year of training can do Nativity Tours, Colonial America, Western Walk-in Tours, Hawaii or most tours that are routed in the Western Galleries. If you are just missing a test or paper you can make it up the summer following training.

What happens if you can't do fifty tours every year?

The Academy is grateful for all of your help. Education Department activities could not be implemented without you. Whatever you can do will be accepted, but remember you were accepted in the training program because we need you to give tours. Activities are planned based on each docent doing an average of fifty-two tours per year.

How many years do you expect me to be a Docent?

A minimum five-year commitment is asked after the two-year training program. Many docents continue giving tours for 10, 20, or even 30 years. After 15 years, you can request an Affiliate status, which means you are not obligated to do fifty-two tours each year. As an affiliate, you can do whatever tours you wish and attend as many of the trainings or events offered to the docents as you like.

The Curator of Education may grant a temporary leave of absence to any docent. Any docent who resigns and is reinstated may expect a period of reorientation and training at the discretion of the Curator of Education.

How do I know that I am doing a good job?

As required by the docent by-laws, docents will be evaluated once every two calendar years in order to gain new ideas and help them improve their tours. The procedure will include a choice of Docent Council supported evaluation forms - self, peer, video or staff evaluation – your choice. Whatever you select, a meeting with the Curator of Education follows, where you can discuss your tours or any questions or concerns you may have. The Curator of Education may evaluate docents at any time, especially if they have not followed the required process.

Does the museum know that I give tours?

Oh yes, and they highly value your service. The Academy honors ALL volunteers at the annual Sunday Brunch in the spring. Awards are given for 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 and 40 years of service. Docents have received recognition for 40 years of service. Further, the Education Department will honor you with a special docent pin at the Spring Annual Meeting for doing 50 or more tours in the previous calendar year.

Can I do something other than tours to help and for credit toward my 50-hour commitment?

Although the Education Department counts on you for doing tours there are some additional ways to help. Free Sundays and MLC gallery time equal tour credit but only half of the time worked. Lead docents also earn an extra half credit.

How will I know if I reach fifty-two tours?

It is a good idea to keep a record of all tours you do as a cross check with the Education Department where records are kept of your participation. You can check with the Education Department for your total hours as these records are available.

Must I be a member of the Academy of Arts to be a docent?

While membership is not required to be a volunteer in the Academy, docents should consider maintaining current membership in the Honolulu Academy of Arts.

What does it mean when I wear my docent nametag and my volunteer badge?

The docent nametag (black and white), easily read by visitors, designates you as a fully trained docent. The volunteer badge (issued by security with your photo) indicates you are "official." When wearing the two badges, docents should be helpful to any visitors, including gently explaining the "no photo and no touching rules" when there are violations. The volunteer badge entitles us to enter the museum and galleries at any time when staff is

present, when the museum is not open to the public. It is important to wear the white badge when in the museum on docent business so the guards know we are authorized to be in the galleries. (They can see the white badge on their monitors but not the smaller black badges.)

What is that group of docents who organize docent activities?

This is the Executive Board of the Docent Council. All docents are members of the Docent Council. The By-Laws say as their purpose, "The Council implements and supplements mandates of the Honolulu Academy of Arts Charter through educational meetings, programs, newsletters and social events beyond basic Academy directed activities. The Council operates under the direction of and in cooperation with the Curator of Education."

Docents attend Docent Council meetings, unless previously excused by the Chair. Docents pay dues to the Docent Council as required by that Council in January. The treasurer will send out late notices in March. If dues are a financial burden for the docent, she/he may be confidentially excused from this commitment by the Curator.

Who to Call?

ANYTIME WHEN YOU NEED IMMEDIATE HELP

Call 532-3660

This rings on all phones (except Erin Boll's and Shangri-La). If no one answers, LEAVE A MESSAGE and your call will be answered by the first person that is free. Often, we are in the galleries, assisting people or on the phone and cannot answer. Someone will respond right away!

