



AKDC Collections Curator (Aga Khan Documentation Center, Department of Distinctive Collections, MIT Libraries)

ABOUT THE ROLE

The AKDC Collections Curator is a versatile and exciting new role for a specialist in Islamic art and/or architecture who will be responsible for researching AKDC's extensive physical collections and making them accessible to a range of audiences. The Collections Curator will lead projects on describing and disseminating the unique archival holdings the center, and as well as creating and working on collaborative projects of both a scholarly nature as well as generating public events and projects around the collections. The role will also design and carry out workflows that document, preserve, and render our collections accessible, will undertake outreach activities to communicate the importance of our collections, both in person and digitally. The Collections Curator will also contribute to the center's relationships with a range of local and international stakeholders, including collaborations with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the wider Aga Khan Development Network.

The key responsibilities of the role are collections description and research (35%), collections management (30%), collaboration and outreach (25%) and project management (10%). This role will report to the Program Head of the Aga Khan Documentation Center and work closely with colleagues in AKDC and the Department of Distinctive Collections as well as across MIT Libraries more widely, while also collaborating closely with the students, researchers and faculty of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture.

AGA KHAN DOCUMENTATION CENTER

Established by an endowment from His Highness the Aga Khan in 1979, the Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT (AKDC@MIT) is a research center and visual archive situated within the Department of Distinctive Collections and serving the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture.

AKDC supports collecting, public engagement, teaching and scholarship on the history of Islamic architecture and visual culture and holds unique and extensive physical collections, including the archives of architects and scholars, featuring sketches, drawings, personal papers and photographic collections, as well as visual resources for the study of Islamic art and architecture. A key collection in AKDC, the Rifat and Kamil Chadirji photographic archive, contains 100,000 photographs and negatives that document daily life, social conditions and the built environment in Iraq from the 1920s to the 1970s. The pioneers of architectural modernism in the Middle East are represented in our collections, with the drawings, plans, and papers of towering figures such as Rifat Chadirji, Mohamad Makiya, Besim Hakim, Hisham Munir and Michel Écochard held in our archive.

The archive also contains the papers of outstanding figures in the discipline of Islamic Art, including many of the professors and curators who defined the contours of research in this field during the last half century. It also holds the Aga Khan Visual Archive (AKVA), consisting of over 120,000 slides and digital images the built environment of Muslim societies, donated by students and scholars affiliated with the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, as well as academics, scholars, cultural institutions, and architects from around the world.

The images date from the 1970s through the present, and document historic and contemporary sites in the Islamic world, many of which are not documented elsewhere. In addition to its support of AKPIA and curating of its physical archival collections, the Aga Khan Documentation Center provides curatorial

oversight for Archnet, a globally-accessible digital resource focused on architecture, art, environment, landscape, and cultural heritage preservation with a focus on Muslim cultures, in partnership with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

DEPARTMENT OF DISTINCTIVE COLLECTIONS (DDC)

At MIT, DDC coordinates overall collection management and service strategy for the Libraries' combined rare and unique collections – the [Institute Archives](#), the [Aga Khan Documentation Center](#), the [Wunsch Conservation Laboratory](#), [visual collections](#), [personal papers](#) and [rare books](#). DDC is a dynamic and forward-looking department serving students, staff, and researchers at MIT and globally – fully integrated and aligned with the work and vision of the MIT Libraries. As part of the Collections Directorate, DDC benefits from and informs the Libraries' comprehensive collections strategies, including the commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion in the collections, and to vigorously promoting an open scholarship agenda and sharing MIT research with the world.

The [MIT Libraries](#) are on an [exciting journey of transformation](#), prioritizing a digital-first, open scholarship agenda that accelerates the progress of science, promotes equity and inclusion across disciplines, and reduces the marginalization of scholars and scholarship from disadvantaged communities. MIT Libraries has a strong history of questioning existing paradigms and strives to exercise bold leadership in defining models for research libraries in an unpredictable future. The work of the Libraries is taking place in the context of broader reflection and action at MIT, including the first Institute-wide [strategic action plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) and a wide variety of initiatives that further [open and equitable scholarship](#). To further MIT's mission to build a better world, the MIT Libraries are working to make the Institute's distinct body of knowledge more open, equitable, accessible, and durable.

The study of the arts, humanities, and social science at MIT is vibrant and interdisciplinary, *and* does not fit the mold of traditional research in these areas. Working in close proximity to research that pushes the boundaries of science and conventional ideas of what can, or cannot, be built, there are unique opportunities at MIT to generate ideas that cross all sorts of boundaries. The students and scholars drawn to MIT to study these areas appreciate this unique context as they investigate how cultural, political, environmental, and economic knowledge can be applied to solve the world's greatest problems, and how the arts, planning, and design can play a major role in addressing these challenges.

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

Collections description and research (35%)

- Lead and collaborate on research, interpretation, publishing and disseminating information and scholarship on the collections, for AKDC's social media content, MIT's blogs, Archnet or any other relevant outlets in digital or print format, support the AKDS librarian, program head and Archnet content manager in collaborative research projects.
- Design and carry out workflows with processing team to ensure the description and cataloguing of AKDC's physical and digital holdings according to best standards of archival practice into ArchivesSpace, Dome, and Archnet.
- Organize and develop research workshops, seminar series, talks, and conferences (both digitally and in person, as appropriate) to explore AKDC's collections and increase their accessibility and visibility in the wider field.

Collections management (30%)

- Decide strategy with the Conservation team to ensure the correct housing and storage of AKDC's current and future physical archival holdings (including but not limited to architectural drawings, maps, papers, slides, photographs and photographic negatives); support the teaching and hands-on workshops of the Conservation team when activities are relevant to AKDC's material.
- Design and manage an image request and digitization workflow for AKDC's materials and liaise with and support the Imaging Team/Technical services.
- Process new archival acquisitions and manage workflows from housing and storage to description and interpretation.
- Participate in collections emergency response, as needed.

Collaboration and Outreach (25%)

- Design and promote AKDC social media profiles in collaboration with AKDC team, AKTC (Aga Khan Trust for Culture), AKPIA (Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture) and MIT Libraries, generate online engagement and visibility, and revamp our social media and online presence, write and develop engaging online content about AKDC's collections.
- Create new outreach relationships with local communities, as well as and globally in Muslim societies through digital platforms.
- Collaborate with the Reference team/Public Services team in the Special Collections Reading room and participate in organizing the movement of collections through MIT Libraries' spaces; deliver instruction, teaching, show-and-tells and object handling sessions with the wider Distinctive Collections department when relevant to AKDC's materials and area of focus.
- Answer research enquiries, imaging and digitization requests; support the students, postdocs and faculty of AKPIA (Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture) and external researchers in their use of AKDC's collections.

Project management (10%)

- Project manage reporting cycles and communicate with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture; contribute material to annual reports for MIT Libraries and AKTC (Aga Khan Trust for Culture); keep minutes and meetings and records of achievements; help to write and edit content for reports and summaries of AKDC and Archnet's accomplishments and projects; contribute to scheduling for AKDC team and assisting in the organization of meetings with stakeholders, donors, and external collaborators.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Required:

- MA in a relevant subject (history, literature, art or a social sciences related to the study of the Muslim world, with preference given to subjects relating to cultural history, visual and material culture and architecture) or equivalent professional experience; or MLS/MLIS in library/archival/information science or museum studies, or equivalent experience with the development, acquisition, management, and preservation of archival material and/or special collections.
- 3 years of archival, curatorial or library experience, which can include internships, fellowships, placements or equivalent research or work experience with collections, cataloguing, or databases.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and organizational ability
- Proven research capability, as well as the ability to collaborate on complex projects to achieve goals as a team.
- Knowledge of one language spoken in a Muslim-majority country. While proficient spoken and written Arabic would be a basic requirement, AKDC is also very open to a candidate, who, instead of Arabic, has proficiency in a language from a region where we are interested in developing new projects and collaborations in the Muslim world, including but not limited to former Yugoslavia, West Africa, Southeast Asia and Central Asia, where we currently would like to work on developing our cultural and scholarly collaborations.
- Dedication to the value of innovation and experimentation and a desire to advance these values through this position.
- Ability to identify problems, think creatively, and carry out solutions independently or as part of a group or team, particularly when several priorities arise at the same time.
- Positive service attitude with a demonstrated ability to interact effectively with a variety of people, productively handle relationships and conflicts, and to work well with diverse groups of people.
- Enthusiasm for embracing the empathy, courage, self-reflection, and respect essential in a multicultural, diverse and inclusive workplace, and ability to embrace those values in collections and public service work.
- Capacity to learn new skills and methods of working especially dealing with digitized and born-digital material.

We expect candidates to be stronger in some qualifications listed above than others; we are committed to helping our future colleague expand their skills, as well as learning from their areas of strength.

Preferred:

- PhD in a relevant subject and/or publications on a relevant topic
- Research background in modernist architecture, or the modern history of Islamic art and visual culture.
- Project management qualification or demonstrated experience with project planning and evidence of being able to lead complex projects through to completion.

The Institute promotes the principle that every person brings unique qualities and talents to the community and that every individual should be treated in a respectful manner. All members of the MIT community are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, personal integrity, and respect for the rights, differences and dignity of others ([MIT's personal conduct policy](#)).

BACKGROUND READING:

- [MIT Libraries Vision: A New Urgency](#)
- [MIT Open Access Task Force Recommendations](#)
- [MIT Institute-wide Task Force on the Future of Libraries Report](#)
- [Creating a Social Justice Mindset: Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in the Collections Directorate of the MIT Libraries](#)
- [MIT Framework for Publisher Contracts](#)

SALARY AND BENEFITS: This job is a pay Grade 8 with the following range (min-mid-max):

\$69,100	\$91,580	\$114,065
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Actual salary will depend on qualifications and experience. MIT offers excellent benefits including a choice of health and retirement plans, a dental plan, tuition assistance, and fully subsidized MBTA passes for local bus and subway service. Flexible work arrangements, including flex-time and flex-place, are considered for positions that meet established criteria. The MIT Libraries is a collegial and supportive working environment and fosters professional growth of staff with management training and travel funding for professional meetings

APPLICATION PROCESS: Apply online at: <https://hr.mit.edu/careers> applications must include cover letter and resume. Priority will be given to applications received by **May 31st, 2022**; position open until filled. MIT is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community and particularly encourages applications from qualified women and minority candidates. Professionals who enthusiastically embrace the empathy, courage, self-reflection and respect of a multi-cultural, diverse and inclusive workplace, and who strive to incorporate those values in their work and interactions are encouraged to apply.

ABOUT THE MIT LIBRARIES:

The MIT Libraries support teaching, learning, and research across the Institute, with millions of resources, deep expertise, and five campus locations where our community consumes and creates knowledge. Our organization is on an exciting journey of transformation, pursuing a digital-first model for research libraries and prioritizing an open scholarship agenda. We aim to exercise bold leadership in defining a model for research libraries in the future, with innovative spaces like the newly renovated Hayden Library and a focus on supporting data-intensive and computational research and learning.

We strive to do great things, powering the MIT community to solve complex problems in the service of humankind, and each member of our 146-person staff has a role to play in pursuing that vision. We're constantly adapting to the rhythms of a changing world, and we welcome candidates who can help us do that in thoughtful and strategic ways that center our mission and values.

MIT Libraries is an environment that welcomes any body, any mind — including all genders — and particularly encourages applications from underrepresented minorities, women, disabled applicants, and veterans. Professionals who enthusiastically embrace the empathy, courage, self-reflection, and

respect of a multicultural, diverse, and inclusive workplace and who strive to incorporate those values in their work and interactions are encouraged to apply.