

MY CAREER PATH CHARLOTTE



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Rialtas na hÉireann
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Charlotte works as a Guide at the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland.

"In my role I am part of something bigger, an institution that has such a positive impact on society. Being a part of that gives me great job satisfaction. The established links and recognition of the larger OPW organisation also offer me more opportunities, e.g. networking, training."



I grew up in the countryside and always loved animals and plants. I have always had a broad range of interests and shied away from narrowing my field. While at school I worked part-time as a babysitter.



I studied History and Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin. While completing my undergraduate studies, I found some work proofreading and cleaning student accommodation in the summer.



When I graduated (2011) it was very difficult to find full-time employment because of the recession. So, I did a teaching English as a foreign language course and went to Bangkok for 6 months in 2012.



On my return, I decided to do a master's in Public History and Cultural Heritage. I was looking for work related to my studies. One of my classmates told me that the Office of Public Works was looking for guides at various sites. I saw the list and I chose to apply for the National Botanic Gardens.



I started working as a guide on a short-term contract while finishing my thesis spring/summer 2013. As I got on well, I was asked to stay. Eventually I got a permanent position.



I had no formal background in plants so it was a challenge to prove myself in the interview. Luckily, my enthusiasm for communication and my passion for engaging people with the wonders of nature shone through. I saw the Botanic Gardens as a place with many aspects – a place where history, science, and art converge.



The key breakthrough for me was finding my passion (plants and nature). My enthusiasm carries me and my audience along and helps me to deliver some important messages. I am getting better at this every day. Meeting more people and having new challenges and experiences has built up these skills continuously. I knew that I would find it difficult to have a 'desk job' with little opportunity to get outdoors.



My primary role is delivering general tours of the Gardens. I also design and deliver special themed tours, e.g. 'Plants and Power - Botanical imperialism' and 'Scent-sational'. I have presented talks, based on my research of the Gardens history. I help develop a variety of workshops for children and students, from primary to third level. These include 'Budding Botanist' flower pressing workshops and a 'Delve Deeper' microscope workshop.



My involvement in the promotion of the Gardens includes running social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), editing and updating the website botanicgardens.ie, photography, and writing press releases. Additional responsibilities include taking bookings, administration, cash handling, stock taking, and reception duty in the visitor centre. I have spoken about my tours for RTÉ television, the Irish Times, and various radio programmes.



Job Specification – Seasonal Guide/ Information Officer



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DEPARTMENT	Office Public Works, Heritage Services Learn more here
SALARY	€10.75 - €17.43 an hour *subject to change
ROLE DESCRIPTION	<p>Visitor Services of the Office of Public Works employ enthusiastic people to join their dedicated Guide Teams at National Monument/National Historic Property Sites under their remit. These could include Ireland's most iconic heritage properties, including Ireland's two World Heritage Sites, 780 National Monuments and over 2,000 acres of gardens and parklands.</p> <p>Duties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of the Site. • Ensuring that any rules for visitors are observed. • Visitor Reception & Related Duties. • Introducing visitors to the site and its facilities. • Operating audio visual or other appropriate equipment. • Dealing with enquiries about the area and its visitor facilities. • Supervising and controlling visitors to maintain order and prevent interference with the site. • Being responsible for security and safety at the site • Welcoming visitors to the site. • Administering admission tickets and receipts. • Giving guided tours through Irish and other languages where applicable.
REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage awareness and an appreciation and interest in history. • The ability to work as part of a team. • Sound judgement and decision making ability. • Concern for clarity and work quality. • Awareness of health and safety. • Commitment to Quality Customer Service. • Relevant work experience. • The willingness to take direction. • Excellent communication skills including confidence and an ability to address groups. • Experience of working with ICT systems and procedures. • Awareness of the need to protect the site. • Aspects of this role may be physically demanding. Therefore a reasonable level of general fitness is required.
APPLICATION PROCESS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Register up for job alerts on publicjobs.ie to know when opportunities become available. 2. Apply online at Publicjobs.ie before closing date. 3. Online Assessment Questionnaire 4. Interview

