

ISAC/Field Museum Postdoctoral Scholar

About ISAC and the Field Museum

The Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (ISAC) of the University of Chicago is a leading interdisciplinary research center for the ancient Middle East. Since its founding in 1919 – a time when the Middle East was called the Orient – the work of the ISAC has assumed an extraordinary array of forms. We conduct definitive fieldwork projects that shape archaeology, and we discover ancient settlements and their landscapes through state-of-the-art satellite and digital imaging methods. Our linguistic research furthers the decipherment of ancient languages, and we produce dictionaries that serve as cultural encyclopedias for understanding ancient civilizations. We record, document, and preserve imperiled cultural heritage. The ISAC Museum (ISACM), which opened to the public in 1931, houses the largest collections of artifacts from ancient West Asia and North Africa in the United States, with more than 350,000 artifacts excavated primarily by ISAC archaeologists. The ISACM collections also include a comprehensive archive that documents our fieldwork and other research. Together, these collections comprise one of the best resources in the work for West Asia and North Africa, allowing us to understand, reveal, and protect the past.

The Field Museum and its collections originated from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Originally named the Field Columbian Museum of Chicago and housed in the Exposition's Palace of Fine Arts, the Field Museum moved to its current 1.2 million square foot, neoclassical building on the lakefront Museum Campus in 1921. The Museum welcomes 1.3 million visitors each year to 37 permanent exhibitions and 8-10 special exhibitions, covering 350,000 square feet. The collections number nearly 40 million artifacts and specimens—including a library of more than 250,000 volumes—which makes it the fourth largest natural history collection in the world today. Collections are focused on the botany, geology (including paleontology), zoology, and anthropology of the living world. The Collections Resource Center, 186,000 square feet of state-of-the-art storage space on-site at the Museum, opened in 2005. Programming includes interdisciplinary research, environmental conservation efforts, and educational outreach that directly impacts more than 890,000 preK-12 children and educators annually.

Job Description Summary: The University of Chicago Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (ISAC) and the Field Museum of Natural History invite applications for a Postdoctoral Scholar for the 2024—2027 academic years. This is a thirty-six-month, non-renewable appointment. The Scholar will be an integral part of the conservation and exhibition preparation team.

During the first year of the appointment, the Post-Doctoral Fellow will conduct capturing and manipulating 3D data related to the museums' collections; integrating 2D and 3D data into the museum databases; 3D printed artifact reproduction at various scales, under supervision of the curatorial/conservation department; serving as a liaison with vendors and non-collections museum departments (e.g. Digital Records, Archives, and Publications, Exhibition department, photographers, engineers, 3D scanning and milling companies, etc.); and additional duties as related to the position. For the second year, the Post-Doctoral Fellow will organize and conduct a

two-day conference on key comparatively oriented theoretical or methodological issues in the field of Digital Humanities, with a focus on museum collection management.

We encourage cross-disciplinary proposals that deal with ancient West Asia and North Africa or that compare these regions with other cultural areas. Applicants should take into consideration the research interests represented at ISAC and the Field Museum. The conference will take place in early May 2025. Following the conference, the Postdoctoral Scholar will work with publication staff to assemble and edit the proceedings for publication in the “ISAC Museum Publication” series.

The ISAC/Field Museum Postdoctoral Scholar is expected, at a minimum, to:

- Pursue their own research while in residence.
- Participate in ISAC and Field Museum lectures, symposia, and other events in the University and Field Museum communities.
- During the first year of appointment, the Postdoctoral Scholar will capture and manipulate 3D data related to the museum's collections.
- Integrate 2D and 3D data into the museum's databases.
- Conduct 3D-printed artifact reproduction at various scales, under supervision of the curatorial and conservation departments.
- Serve as a liaison with vendors and non-collections museum departments (i.e., Digital Records, Archives, and Publications).
- In the second year of appointment, the Postdoctoral Scholar will organize and conduct a two-day conference on key comparatively oriented theoretical or methodological issues in the field of Digital Humanities, with a focus on museum collection management.
- During the third year of appointment, the Postdoctoral Scholar will assist the conservation and curatorial departments in digitizing and integrating into the galleries of the Museum a corpus of objects for permanent display.

Minimum Qualifications

Education:

Minimum requirements include a PhD in related field.

Work Experience:

Minimum requirements include knowledge and skills developed through < 2 years of work experience in a related job discipline.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Ph.D in Digital Studies, with a minimum of 1-2 years of design experience.
- Strong computer design skills needed, with knowledge of 3D design software such as Revit, Rhino, SketchUp, or other similar programs.
- Archaeological experience is not necessary, but interest in field is welcomed.

- Experience working with museum collections is preferred.
- Artifact handling and associated skills can be taught while in the position.

Preferred Competencies:

- Excellent organizational, planning, interpersonal, and written skills, including the ability to prioritize and meet concurrent deadlines.
- Ability to anticipate and facilitate problems of departmental and institutional coordination and scheduling. Detail oriented, but flexible and able to handle multiple tasks and deadlines simultaneously.
- Occasional ability to crouch/bend as well as lift up to 50 pounds.

Working Conditions

- Work environment: onsite work required during first 30 days, with option of adopting a hybrid work schedule with approval of supervisors and in alignment with ISAC's museum policy which currently allows for up to 1-day remote work per week. The position is expected to be performed on-site and in direct contact with the museum collection.

Application Documents & Submission Instructions

Only complete applications will be reviewed. The following documents should be compiled into a single PDF file with the naming convention "ISAC-Field PDS_Lastname Firstname.pdf" and e-mailed to isac.fi.iaa2o7une9v7mell@u.box.com.

- CV
- Cover Letter
- 5-page proposal outline the nature and structure of the conference (including the names and paper topics of six to eight participants who have agreed to make presentations, should the conference be funded. For budgetary reasons, international participants should constitute no more than half of the list of six to eight invited speakers.
- A portfolio of previous productions.

Review of applications will begin on September 20th, 2023, and will continue until the position is filled. Start date is March 15th, 2024.

Inquiries may be directed to isac-administration@uchicago.edu with the subject heading "ISAC-Field Post-Doctoral Scholar".

All University departments and institutes are charged with building a faculty from a diversity of backgrounds and with diverse viewpoints; with cultivating an inclusive community that values freedom of expression; and with welcoming and supporting all their members.

We seek a diverse pool of applicants who wish to join an academic community that places the highest value on rigorous inquiry and encourages diverse perspectives, experiences, groups of

individuals, and ideas to inform and stimulate intellectual challenge, engagement, and exchange. The University's Statements on Diversity are at <https://provost.uchicago.edu/statements-diversity>.

The University of Chicago is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Disabled/Veterans Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, status as an individual with a disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law. For additional information please see the University's Notice of Nondiscrimination.

Job seekers in need of a reasonable accommodation to complete the application process should call 773-834-3988 or email equalopportunity@uchicago.edu with their request.

The Field Museum is an equal opportunity workplace and employer. We are committed to equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, citizenship, marital status, disability, gender identity, Veteran status, or any other protected class. We strive to create a working environment that is free of all forms of discrimination and one that promotes human dignity and mutual respect among all staff. We believe every member of our organization enriches our diversity by exposing us to a broad range of ways to understand and engage with the world, to identify challenges, and to discover, design, and deliver solutions.