

Research Internship Opportunity

Archaeological Collections Intern

Duration: 6-Months Internship

Number: 2 (Two)

Location: National Museums of Kenya (NMK), Museum Hill, Nairobi

About Mpala

In the heart of Laikipia County, where golden savannah stretches to the horizon and the calls of over 550 bird species fill the air, lies Mpala, a living laboratory unlike any other. Here, scientists, students, and conservationists from around the world work side by side, tackling urgent global challenges, from protecting endangered species to understanding climate change, from studying human–wildlife coexistence to advancing public health.

At Mpala, research is not confined to books or screens, it is lived, breathed, and experienced in the wild. For those ready to immerse themselves in science at its source, Mpala is more than a workplace, it's a place where your work becomes part of the story of conservation.

About the Project

The University of Nairobi (UoN), Mpala Research Centre (MRC) and Princeton University invite applications from highly motivated and academically talented postgraduate students for the position of **Archaeological Collections Intern**.

The internship forms part of **Phase I of the Mpala Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Project**, a collaborative initiative to document, catalogue and analyze archaeological collections from Mpala Research Centre currently housed at the National Museums of Kenya.

Mpala Research Centre holds a rich archaeological and cultural heritage record representing potentially two million years of human occupation. This project will establish a systematic inventory and analytical assessment of these collections, providing important baseline data for future research and supporting national heritage documentation.

Why Join the Project?

The successful intern will have an opportunity to:

- Work with nationally significant archaeological collections.
- Gain practical experience in museum collections management and documentation.

- Receive mentorship from experienced archaeologists and heritage professionals.
- Contribute to a collaborative research initiative involving NMK, UoN, MRC and Princeton University.
- Strengthen their academic and professional research portfolio.

Key Responsibilities

The successful candidate will:

- Conduct systematic inventories of archaeological collections using museum cataloguing standards.
- Assess the conservation condition of lithic, ceramic and related archaeological materials.
- Re-evaluate diagnostic artefacts using current typological and chronological frameworks.
- Analyze lithic and ceramic materials, including tool morphology and raw material characteristics.
- Cross-reference collections with field notes, accession records, archives and relevant literature.
- Prepare technical descriptions and documentation of artefacts and their archaeological significance.
- Undertake digital photography and selected 3D documentation of artefacts.
- Enter, verify and maintain collection data in the NMK collections management database.
- Assist with preparation of materials for specialist analyses, including radiocarbon dating and lithic technology studies.
- Contribute to technical reports, academic writing and other project outputs.

Qualifications and Experience

Applicants must:

- Be currently enrolled in a **Master's Degree programme** in Archaeology, Anthropology, Geology, Earth Sciences or a closely related discipline.
- Demonstrate a strong interest in African prehistory, archaeology, cultural heritage or museum studies.
- Have excellent observational, analytical, organizational and research skills.
- Demonstrate strong attention to detail and the ability to work systematically with collections and archival materials.
- Be proficient in Microsoft Word and Excel.
- Have strong written English and the ability to prepare clear technical documentation.
- Be able to work independently and effectively within a multidisciplinary team.

- Demonstrate professionalism and care when handling fragile and culturally significant materials.

Desirable Qualifications

Preference will be given to candidates with:

- Experience in museum collections management, curation or heritage documentation.
- Familiarity with archaeological survey techniques or lithic analysis.
- Experience with GIS, spatial data or archaeological databases.
- Artefact or macro-photography skills.
- Knowledge of Kenya's cultural heritage legislation and the National Museums and Heritage Act (2006).
- Proficiency in Kiswahili and/or other Kenyan languages.
- Previous archaeological fieldwork, internship or heritage management experience.

Application Procedure

Interested candidates should submit one combined PDF document containing:

1. Cover letter – maximum one page, outlining interest and relevant experience.
2. Curriculum Vitae – maximum two pages.
3. Contact details for two academic or professional referees.

Applications should be submitted by email to: jobs@mpala.org

Application Deadline: 1st September 2026