



SCIENCE PROJECTS

Job Opportunity: Catering Manager

Location: The Observatory Science Centre, Herstmonceux, East Sussex

Reporting to: Head of Visitor Experience

Responsible For: Catering Staff

Contract & Hours: Permanent position, circa 0.8 FTE

Salary: £16.50 per hour

Role Overview

To manage and develop the OSC's on-site catering operation, overseeing day-to-day café operations while ensuring high standards of food quality, presentation, customer service, and financial performance. The Catering Manager will work with the Head of Visitor Experience to ensure the café enhances the overall visitor experience and contributes to the OSC's strategic objectives. In addition, the Catering Manager will conduct operational responsibility for the site when acting as Duty Manager, ensuring smooth operations, staff oversight, and an excellent visitor experience.

Key Responsibilities

Catering Operations & Food Service:

- Develop and maintain an exciting, innovative menu featuring high quality but simple food and beverages, ideally using local and seasonal ingredients where possible, while ensuring cost-effectiveness and value for money.
- Manage the smooth day-to-day running of the café, including food preparation and service delivery, optimising resources and controlling costs without compromising quality or customer experience.
- Lead on all food preparation for the café, ensuring consistent quality, hygiene, and presentation standards are maintained at all times.
- Support the provision of catering for OSC events, private hires, weddings, and corporate functions as required.
- Ensure counter and display spaces align with OSC guidelines, with customer journey considerations at the forefront.
- Handle all aspects of till operation with careful cash and card control.
- Work up accurate costs and appropriate profit margins for all menu items, whether made in-house or purchased with support from the Finance Director



SCIENCE PROJECTS

- Monitor income and expenditure to ensure ongoing profitability of the café operation, and prepare catering performance summaries (e.g. number of meals served) and contribute to annual budget process and procurement reviews with support from the Finance Director.

Stock Management:

- Source, order, and manage catering stock efficiently, working with approved suppliers to meet operational needs and budget targets, while maintaining high quality standards. All purchases must adhere to correct authorisation procedures.
- Track stock levels and monitor wastage, ensuring effective stock rotation and control. Organise annual stock takes to maintain accurate inventory records.
- Check deliveries, process invoices, and maintain order records and work with the Accounts Assistant to ensure sufficient record keeping.
- Monitor and ensure all storage areas are kept tidy, safe, and compliant with food safety requirements.

Customer Service:

- Deliver exceptional customer service standards, ensuring a friendly, efficient and professional experience for all visitors.
- Respond effectively to customer feedback and develop visitor loyalty.
- Create a positive customer environment and welcoming atmosphere.
- Ensure the café is integrated with the rest of the OSC and contributes to the overall visitor experience.

Health, Safety & Compliance:

- Maintain procedures and safe systems of working that comply with health and safety and food safety legislation.
- Ensure food hygiene standards are met at all times, with accurate records kept.
- Ensure compliance with allergen labelling requirements (PPDS).
- Follow all OSC policies and procedures, reporting deficiencies in systems or equipment.
- Ensure daily cleaning of kitchen areas, equipment, café front-of-house, and dining spaces according to cleaning schedules and requirements.



SCIENCE PROJECTS

Staff Management & Leadership:

- Train OSC General Assistants and other team members to be able to work as Catering Assistants including barista training
- Serve as a role model for the team, exhibiting commitment and ensuring staff work together to create a great visitor experience.
- Support team members to develop their skills through regular feedback and a supportive approach.
- Address employee concerns promptly and encourage engagement by promoting a positive, safe, and healthy work environment.
- Work with Managers and HR to identify training and development needs.

Additional Duty Manager Responsibilities:

When acting as Duty Manager:

- Overseeing the OSC's safe and efficient daily operations, including opening/closing procedures
- Monitor visitor flow, capacity, ensure health & safety compliance, and emergency procedures.
- Manage onsite response to incidents, providing calm and effective leadership in emergencies.
- Assist with coordinating scheduling, rotas, and staff deployment, and participating in call-out rota during closing hours to ensure adequate coverage and high standards of welcome.
- To undertake any other duties and tasks as should reasonably arise at management request.

Person Specification

Essential Knowledge & Experience:

- Experience in a restaurant or café in a senior capacity.
- Knowledge, understanding, and passion for food preparation.
- Experience working in a fast-paced environment.
- Operate the till and handle customer transactions accurately.
- Clear understanding and strong adherence to food hygiene and Health and Safety regulations.
- IT literacy.



SCIENCE PROJECTS

Desirable Knowledge & Experience:

- Formal catering qualification and/or evidence of extensive catering experience.
- CIEH Level 3 Award in Food Safety in Catering.
- Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Hospitality Supervision & Leadership.
- Experience of running a catering operation.
- Knowledge of local resources and suppliers.
- Experience of till systems and stock management.
- Experience monitoring profitability and updating pricing.

Essential Skills & Competencies:

- A flair for quality customer service and a love of food and beverage.
- Friendly, approachable, and a team player.
- Self-motivated, highly organised, adaptable, and resourceful.
- Passionate about enhancing the visitor experience and contributing to the OSC's mission and financial sustainability.

Working Conditions

You will be joining a small, dedicated team. This is a permanent position, circa 0.8 FTE, requiring a flexible approach to cover shifts between Monday to Sunday, including some evenings particularly during peak periods of activity. The cafe will be primarily be open during weekends and school holidays with some evening events.

This role is ideal for someone passionate about food, customer service, and contributing to a vibrant visitor attraction. The successful candidate will be comfortable multitasking, working collaboratively with OSC colleagues, ensuring the café operation supports both visitor satisfaction and financial sustainability, and taking overall responsibility for the safe and efficient operation of the site when acting as Duty Manager.

What we offer

The Observatory Science Centre is part of Science Projects Ltd, an educational charity and operates efficiently & economically.

There is free parking on site, plus free tea/coffee etc. Uniform of polo shirt, sweatshirt and fleece are provided, and you are entitled to employee discount in The Café/The Launch Box & Shop.

Employees are given the opportunity to use their initiative and to expand their role within the team according to their own skill base.



SCIENCE PROJECTS

The successful applicant will be required to start as soon as possible, subject to references etc. Final confirmation of employment will be dependent on satisfactory DBS checks and successful completion of probationary period.

The Observatory Science Centre is a non-smoking environment.

Application Process

To apply, please submit a CV and covering letter to hina@science-projects.org by 5pm, Wednesday, 12th November 2025.

Science Projects is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.