

**Stephanie Glendinning – ACCE DTP**

**2023-24 cohort**

For three months in autumn 2025, I paused my PhD to try something new- a placement with the Learning Team at the Natural History Museum in London! Science communication has been a growing interest during my PhD, and the placement sounded perfect for allowing me to develop my confidence and skills. I had the opportunity to try different roles within the Learning Team and experience the variety of work that goes into science education in a large institution.

I spent one day each week with the learning delivery team, working with other ‘Learning Facilitators’ to run school sessions and engage with visitors to the Museum. I shadowed the sessions for school pupils, including shows, minibeast hunts and classes on evolution, and was trained as assistant on ‘Mission to Mars’ sessions. I supported students to make mini

‘Mars rovers’ out of Lego, which they could code to drive around a tabletop ‘Mars surface’. The pupils added their own features to the base rover model, while thinking about what scientific information they’d like to collect, such as drilling for fossils or taking photos. It was amazing to see the solutions and gadgets they came up with!

Alongside my learning delivery, I developed resources aiming to make learning at the Museum more accessible to everyone. One part of this involved community relationship mapping to identify gaps and opportunities for the community programme. The Museum engages with local community organisations in the surrounding area who work with children and young people experiencing barriers to accessing and connecting with science and nature. I plotted the community organisations that the Learning Team works with onto targeted local areas, to identify areas that were underrepresented.





A Lego rover about to launch to 'Mars'

Another key part of my accessibility work was developing 'visual stories' for Museum events. These are guides with photos showing what a visit to the Museum will look like, to help people prepare for their visit. I completed online training from the Kids in Museums organisation to help me create these guides. I developed a visual story for the COP30 event, 'Voices for Change: A Night of Climate Action' and a template for the October half term Family Festival (which was used for the [Easter Family Festival!](#)). It was challenging making a guide for a space as large as the Museum, with so many different entrances and galleries, but very satisfying, knowing it would make visiting a less stressful experience for many people.

I also worked with the Learning Volunteers team, who run interactive activities within the Museum, led by volunteers. It was really interesting shadowing working with the volunteers and seeing the different types of activities they run. I helped with research for a mammals skulls activity, on how features of the skull give clues to the ecology of the animal. I also assisted with the inventory of the Learning Volunteering collection, learning how the labelling and recording systems work, and how to deal with different types of specimens, including minerals, taxidermy and bones.

The Museum was an amazing place to work; everyone was so welcoming and immediately made me feel part of the team. I learnt many new skills, and gained an insight into the amount and variety of work required to deliver activities and events. This placement has increased my confidence with science communication and made me think about how I can present my research to make it more accessible to different audiences. Engaging the general public in science is vital to spread awareness of conservation efforts, and inspire people to take action for the planet.