

## Understanding user needs on climate change and sustainability

Reference: 2025-E-CCS

<b>Supervisor(s)</b>	Joint supervision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philip Eagle, Subject Librarian, Science (lead)</li> <li>• Catherine Ross, Sustainability Manager</li> </ul>
<b>Team(s) and department(s)</b>	Joint: Content Strategy & Services and Sustainability
<b>Start date/timeframe</b>	Earliest start date June.  Ideally to be Aug/Sep-Nov (if full time) or Jun/Jul - Nov/Dec (if part time).
<b>Duration</b>	<b>Ideally six months part-time, but could be three months full-time</b>
<b>Part time/Full time</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time only <input type="checkbox"/> Part time only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time or part time  Minimum days/week if undertaken part time: 2 days per week
<b>Location/Working arrangements</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Can only be offered on site at St Pancras <input type="checkbox"/> Can be offered as fully remote placement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can be offered as hybrid placement (remote with regular visits)
<b>Application deadline:</b>	Application deadline: <b>Friday 21 February 2025 (17.00 GMT)</b>

Eligibility criteria, funding information and details of how to apply are available on the British Library website: [Research collaboration - The British Library](#)

### **Context and nature of placement project**

The Library is committed to playing its part in tackling the climate crisis and its devastating impacts.

Key to this is understanding how users want to utilise collections, and what collection items can inform their work on climate change, sustainability, and nature loss. With 170 million items, we have untold useful items, but identifying relevant ones will take time and effort. This placement will (i) begin to lay the groundwork for a new Climate Change Curator role, and (ii) make demonstrable progress in the interim.

The successful candidate will be jointly supervised by our Subject Specialist in Science and our Sustainability Manager. It can either be office or home-based with regular visits to St Pancras (to access Reading Rooms and collection items, and to speak to Library staff).

### **Tasks and outcomes**

The primary focus of this placement will be a qualitative analysis of what Library staff who interact regularly with users can tell us about users' needs on sustainability, climate change, and nature loss.

Typical tasks will include:

- Conducting focus groups with a cross sector of Library staff to identify what external users are asking for from the collection, across the breadth of climate change, sustainability, and nature loss;
- Using Excel or Word to begin mapping our collections against the needs of users, applying information needs theory (David Nicholas, ASLIB) or similar;
- Undertaking in-depth interviews with staff drawn from the focus groups (c.3-4 interviews, with possibility for more depending on capacity);
- Transcribing and analysing interview data.

The main outcomes envisaged for this placement are:

- A project report setting out findings and recommendations relating to user needs and collection items;
- Presentations of findings to supervisors, the Sustainability & Climate Change Steering Group, and the Staff Sustainability Group;
- A blog and/or social media posts;
- [If time allows] work with curators to run a Show and Tell event during Green Libraries Week in October.

### **Training and development opportunities**

PhD placement students are welcome to access a wide range of workshops, talks and training available at the Library. Supervisors will offer advice on which opportunities may be of particular relevance. Depending on availability, these wider training opportunities may include, for example, the Digital Scholarship Training Programme, Cultural Property Training, Research Roundtables, Business & IP Centre workshops and staff talks.

In addition, this particular PhD placement will provide the following opportunities:

- Experience of collaborating with a wide range of people across the Library
- Exposure to a wide range of different Library collections and curators
- Learning different communication skills; a report, presentation, blog, and social media
- Attending certified Carbon Literacy Training

### **Required knowledge and skills**

All applicants will be expected to demonstrate the following:

- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing, internally and externally
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office applications and online meeting tools
- Ability to follow instructions and policies, in particular with regard to Health & Safety and the safe use of collections
- Ability to work effectively with others while also completing tasks independently
- Clear reasons for applying to a specific placement and good understanding of the project purpose

In addition, this specific placement project requires the following:

- Interest in (and ideally some knowledge) of climate change and sustainability