

## ***Unearthed* at the British Library: achieving a sustainable exhibition**

Reference: 2025-E-GBL

<b>Supervisor(s)</b>	Joint supervision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catherine Ross, Sustainability Manager (lead)</li> <li>• Hannah Kershaw, Senior Exhibitions Manager</li> </ul>
<b>Team(s) and department(s)</b>	Estates and Exhibitions, St Pancras
<b>Start date/timeframe</b>	Flexible, from June 2025 (if part-time) or late July (if full-time). [Note: the exhibition, <i>Unearthed</i> , closes 9 August 2025]
<b>Duration</b>	Ideally six months part-time, or alternatively three months full-time
<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 <input type="checkbox"/> Can be offered as fully remote placement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can be offered as hybrid placement (remote with some visits)
<b>Application deadline</b>	<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. One element of this is reducing the environmental impact of our regular exhibitions.

Our main spring/summer 2025 exhibition is *Unearthed*, celebrating gardening as a force for creativity, resilience and community and examining how it has shaped centuries of history and continues to inspire today. For this exhibition we have committed to applying a range of new ways of working in order to make it more sustainable. These include:

- the application of the Design Museum's sustainable exhibitions toolkit
- embedding sustainability in the procurement of design and build contracts
- carbon foot-printing the exhibition itself using the Galleries Climate Coalition carbon calculator.

This PhD placement will assess the impact of efforts to make *Unearthed* a sustainable exhibition: **what is the carbon footprint of the exhibition, have the new ways of working made a tangible difference to the sustainability of the exhibition, and what can we learn for future exhibitions?**

The student will be jointly supervised by our Sustainability Manager (lead supervisor) and a member of the Exhibitions team. They can be home-based, with visits to St Pancras for meetings.

There will be interaction with design and build contractors when analysing data, for example amounts of materials, distances travelled, and interviews with stakeholders.

### Tasks and outcomes

The primary focus of this placement is to analyse data derived from teams across the Library, and external exhibition design and build contractors.

Tasks will include:

- Data analysis using the Gallery Climate Coalition toolkit to work out the carbon footprint of *Unearthed* data provided by the Exhibitions team and contractors (e.g. designers, build team, transport agent)
- Interviewing six key stakeholders to gather and analyse qualitative learnings (having established informed consent and objectives of interviews)
- If time allows, desk-based research to identify online case studies and existing research, to provide examples of best practice from which the Library can learn.

The main outcomes envisaged for this placement are:

- A carbon footprint analysis of the *Unearthed* exhibition
- A project report evaluating the impact of the new ways of working, learnings, and what it may mean for future exhibitions
- A presentation to the British Library project team and wider stakeholders
- A staff talk during Green Libraries Week in October, should timings align.

### 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:

- the chance to apply research skills to a real-world problem
- experience of carbon footprinting
- 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:

- Degree in a relevant topic (e.g. environmental science, sustainability, design, architecture)
- Interest in (and ideally some knowledge) of climate change and sustainability
- Numerate; confident with gathering, understanding, and inputting numerical data into an online portal
- Confident abilities in using Excel or an equivalent spreadsheet package for data analysis.