

Contemporary Collecting from Australasia

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Supervisors	Janet Zmroczek, Head of European & Americas Collections; Mercedes Aguirre, Lead Curator, Americas Collections
Department, Location	European & Americas Collections, St Pancras, London
Start date/timeframe	Anytime in the period May 2017-May 2018
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent – see below) <i>For a part-time placement, the student would be required to spend a minimum of 2 days/week on site at the Library</i>
Remote-working	Some elements of remote working would be feasible for this placement, if needed – potentially up to 2 days per week, to be agreed with the supervisor in advance

Context for placement

The European, Americas & Australasia team at the British Library are responsible for building the collections of contemporary publications from these regions and enabling access to them for a wide range of audiences from academic researchers to school students and the general public. With the British Library's major exhibition in summer 2018 on James Cook's voyages of exploration as a backdrop, we would like to host a PhD student placement to help us review and refresh our contemporary collecting profile for Australasia and contribute to the development of future collecting policy for this region, both for print and digital resources.

New insights from a student with knowledge of or research interests in the region will help the Library to ensure that we acquire a selection of materials representing the diversity of contemporary publications from Australia and New Zealand.

Expected tasks and outcomes

The placement student will be given an induction to the Library by the curatorial team and collection development specialists. As well as learning about the methods, tools and sources currently used to inform collection development, the student will be given an overview of existing Australasian collections, both historic and contemporary. Building on this induction, and working closely with these British Library staff, the placement student will then use his/her knowledge of contemporary debates in the cultural and public life of Australia and/or New Zealand in order to contribute to refreshing the collection development profile for Australasia. Regular catch-ups with the placement supervisors will help to monitor progress and address any issues and questions that come up over the course of the research.

The placement project will include helping to identify relevant books, journals, websites and publishers to ensure that a diverse and representative selection of current research publications are acquired along with works relevant to key debates in public life and those which disseminate current cultural production. We are particularly keen to ensure that issues relating to identity – including the viewpoints of indigenous communities – are adequately represented in the Library's contemporary collecting.

Outputs from the placement would include:

- A report for internal departmental use, with recommendations for updates to existing collecting profiles for Australasia, lists of relevant publishers and digital resources, and recommendations of specific books and journals for acquisition
- Blogs for a public audience focusing on particularly interesting or innovative publications (or types of publication) that are identified during the placement and how these publications relate to the Library's existing collections

Training and experience expected to be gained by student through the placement

This is an opportunity for a PhD student to apply their research and communications skills to meet an important strategic objective, contributing in a tangible way to the development of future collecting policy for Australasia.

The placement student will gain experience of working as part of a team developing the collections of one of the world's leading research libraries and cultural institutions. The placement will also provide hands-on

training in the tools and methods used in collection development. The student will develop bibliographical research skills and an understanding of different ways in which research and cultural production are disseminated. The placement will also offer insights into how national libraries are engaging with both traditional print and new and emerging digital formats.

In summarising the findings of his/her research for internal departmental purposes, the student will develop report-writing skills and expertise in engagement with different audiences and stakeholders. By contributing to the departmental blog, the student will develop skills in communicating research finding for a broad, international public audience.

Required knowledge and skills

The student will be expected to have a keen interest in contemporary debates in the cultural and public life of Australia and/or New Zealand. S/he will have the ability to identify, survey and evaluate large numbers of resources in a timely fashion and keep detailed records of his/her findings.