

Afrikaans literature

Reference: 2018-16-KIN

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| Supervisor | Marja Kingma, Curator Germanic Collections |
| Department, Location | European and American Studies, St Pancras |
| Start date/timeframe | The placement would ideally begin either in September 2018 or January 2019, though there is some flexibility. |
| 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 | If required, the placement could be undertaken working from home for 2 days per week (or part-time equivalent). |

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| Context for placement |
| <p>The Germanic studies section (part of the European and American Collections department) at the British Library is home to a Dutch language collection, which includes material in Dutch, Flemish, Frisian and Afrikaans. Afrikaans is a relatively small part of this collection and covers creative literature only. Given the growing interest in both Britain and the Netherlands to South Africa during the colonial and post-colonial period, the British Library’s Afrikaans fiction collection has potential to be of great value to researchers. Yet it is currently underexplored, mostly because not enough is known about the exact holdings, their scope, numbers and quality.</p> <p>Material in Afrikaans has always been acquired by the Library; most recently, non-fiction material, largely published in South Africa, has been acquired regularly for the African collections since 2003, and older holdings are quite extensive. It is however unclear how consistently acquisitions were made over the years. The possible impact of the various boycotts of the apartheid regimes on the BL’s acquisition policy has never been examined and is one of the topics this research placement intends to address.</p> <p>The goal of the placement more broadly will be to review the BL’s Afrikaans collections, to identify gaps and develop strategies for a future acquisition strategy, as well as to promote existing collections to new audiences.</p> |
| Expected tasks and outcomes |
| <p>The placement student will review the existing Afrikaans collections at the BL, comparing them to published bibliographies and the collections of other libraries, such as Zuid Afrika Huis in Amsterdam. This will involve identifying gaps and researching the way selections were or were not done, especially during the apartheid period (1948-1994).</p> <p>In its second phase, the placement student will then research:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What titles published during the apartheid period are still available and would be eligible to purchase 2. Developments of Afrikaans literature and language since the end of apartheid 3. Available online resources in Afrikaans <p>The student will have scope to concentrate on those topic or topics mentioned above that fit best with their interests and expertise.</p> <p>Based on their findings, the student will be asked to produce a report that will be used to inform future acquisitions practices at the Library, in order to make the collection relevant to research on Afrikaans as a language and its place in the history and culture of South Africa. The student will also produce a collection guide on the Afrikaans collection for the BL website. Should a suitable opportunity present itself, they would be encouraged to present the findings of their research during the placement at a conference or write them up for publication in a relevant journal.</p> <p>Throughout the placement, there will be opportunities for the student to promote their findings via the European Studies blog, and possibly the Asian and African Studies blog, raising wider awareness of the BL’s Afrikaans collection.</p> <p>The Library is also keen to develop closer links with other institutions that hold Afrikaans language collections,</p> |

both in South Africa and in the Netherlands, and time permitting and in consultation with the BL supervisor the placement student will reach out to appropriate contacts.

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

The student will be based in the European and American Collections department and will have the opportunity to shadow the work of curators in this section. They will also receive support from the Library's Africa Curator.

At the beginning of the placement, they will receive an introduction to the wider BL's collections and acquisitions processes, to provide context to this placement. The placement supervisor will then introduce the student to the Dutch collections in general and the Afrikaans collection in particular and provide any necessary training, for example in the use of specialist catalogues. They will meet regularly with the student throughout the placement to monitor their work and progress.

The student will have access to wider training across the Library, for example in Digital Scholarship skills.

The placement will allow the student to develop an understanding of how one of the world's leading research libraries manages, builds and uses its collections. The student will also gain an advanced insight into the book and publishing trade, in particular that of non-Western countries. They will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of South Africa's history and its contemporary literary scene. In consultation with the BL supervisor, they would have the opportunity to explore particular areas within the literary field of Afrikaans that might be of interest.

The placement will also offer the opportunity to develop the student's communication and writing skills by writing the report for internal BL audiences, as well as through blog posts and a collection guide, which are both geared at non-specialist audiences.

Required knowledge and skills

- medium-level knowledge of Dutch or Afrikaans
- an interest in South African literature and/or history and politics would be desirable

This is a training and development opportunity open to current PhD students only. It is not intended to lead to a permanent post at the Library. Please note that the Library is unable to provide a stipend for PhD research placements. Applicants must obtain the support of their PhD supervisor and Graduate Tutor (or someone in an equivalent senior academic management role) in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.