



# Examining the role of internal engagement and communications in the British Library

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<b>Supervisor</b>	Miki Lentin, Head of Corporate Affairs
<b>Department, Location</b>	Corporate Affairs, St Pancras
<b>Start date/timeframe</b>	We would ideally like the placement to be undertaken sometime in the period between April 2018 and September 2018.
<b>Duration</b>	<b>3 months</b> (or part-time equivalent – see below) <i>A full-time placement would be preferable for this project. However, if necessary, it would be possible for the placement to be conducted on a part-time basis – in which case the student would be required to spend a minimum of 3 days/week on site at the Library</i>
<b>Remote-working</b>	If required, the placement could be undertaken working from home for certain days of the week – this is flexible and could be discussed and agreed prior to the start of the placement.

## Context for placement

The British Library launched a programme called ‘One-British Library’ in 2012 which aimed to reduce silo and fragmented working and to create a one-organisation approach to the Library. The programme involved a broad staff consultation exercise that asked staff for their suggestions of what improvements could be made to the organisation and what new products and services could be developed across sites and across teams to support the organisation’s broader business objectives. Over 1,000 suggestions were made by colleagues, many of which were implemented. Further, the Organisational Development team ran a series of Open Space workshops that aimed to give staff a voice to express their thoughts on areas of the Library that could be improved.

It is now five years after the launch of One-BL and three years since the publication of the [Living Knowledge](#) – our vision for development as we look ahead to the Library’s 50th anniversary as the national library of the United Kingdom in 2023. Taking stock, we are keen to think about how we turn our internal communications into more engagement-led activity. This should support us to continue to create a strong cohort of advocates of the organisation internally but also to continue to look at how we can engage more and transmit less with colleagues.

With that in mind, we would be keen to support a PhD research placement to help define how we might develop our internal engagement/ communications activity and how we could use new and innovative techniques to develop our thinking in this area. This project would be particularly suited to someone who is researching topics that relate – directly or indirectly – to internal networks, collaborative working or the power of communication and engagement. We are keen to engage with academic insights into how the British Library as an organisation might think differently and innovatively about internal engagement and communications over the next five years of *Living Knowledge*.

## Expected tasks and outcomes

The placement student will be asked to develop a report or new methodology on how they feel the Library could be better at engaging with its colleagues across the organisation, focusing on areas such as internal communications or change management programmes.

The placement student will have access to a wealth of existing data about staff engagement and communications within the Library. This will include recent long staff surveys as well as quarterly ‘pulse surveys’, access to data from our intranet, staff training data as well as other data sources. Further, they would be able to see the results of the previous One BL programme and the suggestions that were made then as well as ongoing enabling strategies, such as our People Strategy. The student could, as part of their research, run staff workshops and also consult with the Library’s Trade Union representatives if needed, but how they go about interviewing and workshopping with colleagues will be up to them to decide, in discussion with the placement supervisor.

The placement could also involve desk research into how other organisations have approached or are approaching this issue – we are keen to learn more from other organisations about how we might focus more on engagement.

The exact approach the placement student takes will be discussed and agreed at the start of the project, taking account of their particular research skills, interests and academic knowledge. The format and structure of the report and its potential internal audience would be agreed at the start of the placement, and examples of similar or related outputs could be provided to guide the student.

The placement student would be expected to present their findings initially to the Corporate Affairs and Internal Communications teams, as well as to HR via Organisational Development. This will help the development of future internal engagement strategies and inform how the organisation engages with its staff over the next five years of Living Knowledge. Further, it might be applicable for the student to present the findings at an internal ‘Open House’ update meeting for staff and via other internal communication channels such as *Shelflife* (the BL’s internal staff news bulletin) or a video on the staff intranet. Additional suggestions for dissemination and discussion of the placement’s findings include a series of staff talks at both the St Pancras and Boston Spa sites, hosted and supported by the Corporate Affairs and Organisational Development teams. It would also be possible to post about the placement on the Library’s [Living Knowledge](#) blog.

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

The placement would be supervised by the Head of Corporate Affairs at St Pancras. Further support and guidance will be provided by the Head of Organisational Development, a role that is based at the Library’s Boston Spa site in Yorkshire. A visit to Boston Spa would be arranged as part of the induction for the placement; additional meetings with Boston Spa colleagues (in person and via video-conferencing) would be scheduled during the placement (associated travel expenses would be covered by the British Library.)

The student would receive a full induction programme that will include meetings with relevant colleagues as well as tours of the Library building at St Pancras. Progress will be monitored via a weekly catch-up (with catch-ups every other day during the initial two weeks of the placement). Training needs and requirements will be discussed at the start of the placement. The placement student will also be able to job shadow various members of the Corporate Affairs team including the Head of Corporate Affairs as well as other team members (subject to discussion) therefore gaining a broad experience of life ‘behind the scenes’ at the Library.

Through the placement the student will be exposed to working within two interesting and active parts of the organisation – the Communications and Organisational Development teams. In addition to opportunities to attend various internal training programmes and sessions, we will fund the student to attend one or two training sessions with external industry bodies, such as the PRCA (Public Relations Consulting Association) or CIPR (Chartered Institute of PR). Further, there will be the opportunity for the student to attend internal Library events (for example by the Press team).

More generally, the placement brings the chance to develop and enhance key transferable skills in communicating research findings to different stakeholders and audiences. The report will provide experience in writing for a policy-oriented corporate audience. Contributing to the British Library’s blogs will enhance expertise in communicating research outcomes in a way that is accessible to the general public.

#### **Required knowledge and skills**

Applicants should be IT literate and fluent English speakers. They should be open to new ways of working and innovative thinking and would ideally (though this is not essential) have had some previous experience of working in a large organisation.

This project would be particularly suited to someone who is researching topics that relate – directly or indirectly – to internal networks, collaborative working or the power of communication and engagement.

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.