

Trade Literature in the British Library collection

Reference: 2019-17-SYE

Supervisor	Saba Syed, Head of Business Development – Digitisation Services
Department, Location	Digitisation - St Pancras, London
Start date/timeframe	The start date can be flexible but we would prefer the placement to start sometime after June 2019.
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent).
Remote-working	If required, there is flexibility in terms of number of days on site over the period of the placement, although we would expect the student to be on site for at least a couple of days per week at the start of the project.
Context for placement	
<p>British Library Digitisation Services have been providing digitisation and scanning services to external customers for over two decades, both from the library's own collection, but also through digitisation of third party collections. With studios at both its St Pancras and Boston Spa sites, the department is responsible for digitising well over 2 million pages per year on behalf of commercial customers. The department is one of the areas of the library that is responsible for bringing in revenue to support Library services and has an ambitious commercial strategy to grow this revenue.</p> <p>The British Library has a vast collection of UK trade catalogues and other ephemera produced during the course of business. The Digitisation department has identified that the material is of potential commercial value to rightsholders and publishers and would like to work with a PhD student to research the scope of the collection and identify material which would be of commercial interest to customers. As well as researching the Library's own collection, the student would look at the digital landscape in terms of availability of trade literature. What has been digitised, who is making it available and how is it accessed? Is material behind a paywall or free?</p> <p>The placement will thus assist the Library in terms of supporting the commercial strategy for digitisation, as well as providing valuable information about the trade literature collection. It could also provide a case study for future projects applying the same methodology to other forms of content.</p>	
Expected tasks and outcomes	
<p>The student will be expected to research the trade literature collection from the perspective of commercial opportunities. They will work with the Digitisation department as well as the staff responsible for the collection to provide an overview of the Library's corpus of material. Additionally they will be required to provide an analysis of what material is available digitally through other avenues and how material has been made available. It is envisaged that the student will meet with other organisations with trade literature collections in the UK to understand how they are making their collections available. Agreed travel expenses for such meetings will be covered by the Library.</p> <p>Outputs will include a written report and presentation on the global trade literature landscape, highlighting material that has been made available digitally and identifying potential scope for digitising material in the Library's collection in conjunction with commercial partners.</p> <p>The placement supervisor will facilitate introductions and (depending on timings and staff availability and capacity) job shadowing opportunities in other relevant areas of the Library, such as the Contemporary British Publications curatorial team, the Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) or the Research Services Department, providing an opportunity to place the placement project in the wider context of the Library's collection and management of Trade literature and other business ephemera, and its activities to make this accessible and discoverable to different users.</p>	

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

The initial induction would include meetings with curators and staff in the Digitisation department as well as other appropriate areas of the library. The student would be able to attend relevant staff talks, workshops and training events which coincide with the placement – for example the sessions offered as part of the Library’s in-house Digital Scholarship Training Programme. There will also be opportunities to network with other placement students, research fellows and collaborative doctoral students.

The supervisor would meet with the student on a weekly basis to monitor progress.

The student will be able to use their research techniques in a commercial setting and will be contributing to the success of the Library’s Digitisation Services, as well as supporting understanding of the Library’s collections. The placement will enable the student to develop their understanding of how a national library operates and an understanding of digitisation and secondary publishing.

The student will be able to use their creativity to suggest ways to conduct the research and be innovative. Potential approaches and key colleagues and institutional contacts will be discussed with the student at the start of the placement and reviewed throughout in weekly meetings with the placement supervisor.

Through undertaking this placement the student will have the benefit of utilising their research techniques in a commercial work setting and will be contributing in a real and tangible way to the success of the Library’s Digitisation Services. The placement will enable the student to develop their communication and networking skills through engagement with Library partners. The project will enable the student to develop skills and knowledge regarding the digitisation of collections (including digitisation techniques, IPR and copyright, publishing) and will be able to experience at first hand BL processes and procedures, as well as those of the department’s customers.

Required knowledge and skills

This placement would particularly suit someone with knowledge of either trade literature, digitisation or the publishing industry.

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 in advance and, as part of their process, consult their HEI to ascertain what funding is available to support them.

Application deadline: 5pm on Monday, **18 February 2019**. Information on how to apply is available on our website: <https://www.bl.uk/news/2019/january/phd-research-placements-2019>