

Making the case for the national library – exploring the value of how collections are used

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Supervisor	Rob Field (Head of Public Policy)/ Lily Barratt (Public Policy Officer)
Department, Location	Corporate Affairs / Public Policy - St Pancras, London
Start date/timeframe	There is some flexibility around the start date, but our preference would be to host the placement from May to July 2019.
Duration	3 months (or part-time equivalent). For a part-time placement, the student would be required to spend a minimum of 3 days/week on site at the Library.
Remote-working	It would be possible for the student to be based off-site for some of the placement – but some on-site working would be needed for the project induction and for access to physical collections.
Context for placement	
<p>The British Library has a need and responsibility to make the strongest possible case for the public funding it receives (around £94m each year) to ensure a sustainable level of budget in the coming years. This means being able to fully articulate the diverse ways that different users use the Library and its collections, and how this use produces public value and benefit. This placement project will provide a platform for a PhD student to apply their research skills and expertise by exploring the Library's collections to for case studies that serve this purpose.</p> <p>The project will also offer a bespoke 'behind-the-scenes' development opportunity in a high-profile public policy context and setting. We would aim to use the case studies produced through the placement in a wide range of communications and influencing activity, helping policymakers to understand the value the Library creates and the importance of continuing levels of Grant-in-Aid investment.</p>	
Expected tasks and outcomes	
<p>The student will join the Public Policy team (within the Corporate Affairs Department) and support their work with useful and interesting content to help communicate our key messages. While there is a considerable degree of flexibility for the placement to be shaped by the student's own areas of interest and/or themes that emerge in early research, we would expect the following:</p> <p>The student will be asked to map the different collection areas, and develop a methodology for identifying where case studies could be developed. They will be supported by Public Policy colleagues in this task. Examples might include speaking to entrepreneurs using the Library's Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC), or speaking to researchers or well-known people who use the Library. This activity could also include doing wider desktop research. For example, the student could identify different researchers who make reference to using the Library, ranging from family tree amateur historians to Nobel Prize winners.</p> <p>The placement student would be expected to research each case study including, where appropriate, interviewing individuals and organisations, to create well written case study material (no more than two pages per example). This is a new process so the total output will need to be negotiated in the early stage of the placement but six examples, covering our core Living Knowledge purposes, would be a baseline requirement. Alternative formats, such as images and video could also be deployed, depending on the skillset and interests of the student.</p> <p>Towards the end of the placement, the student would be asked to present the final set of case studies to relevant Library working groups and meetings, along with sharing their own feedback and insights into how the Library can continue to capture compelling case study content in future.</p> <p>We would also encourage and support the student to liaise with the Library's marketing and</p>	

communications teams to explore potential ways to adapt the case study content for publication on the Library's website and blogs or for the stories they uncover to be publicised through the Library's social media networks and other communication channels.

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

The placement student will receive an initial induction to the British Library, the Corporate Affairs team and a briefing on the Library's current Living Knowledge strategic positioning across different areas of public policy. They would be inducted into relevant working groups along with other key policy professionals working across the Library (and where relevant, externally, such as the London Knowledge Quarter).

The placement itself would be undertaken under the supervision of the Head of Public Policy, with daily catch-ups for first two weeks of the placement moving to a more informal weekly pattern thereafter. The format and structure of the outputs and their audience, would be discussed at the start of the placement, and the student will be given the opportunity to shape the placement as a whole around their own interests, knowledge or expertise. The placement student would be encouraged to participate in external policy and networking events and job shadowing opportunities within other Library teams (depending on staff availability and capacity) could be arranged if of interest.

Overall, the placement provides an opportunity for a PhD student to gain valuable experience of translating research into policy positioning, and to learn at first hand and in a supportive environment from British Library colleagues involved in various aspects of policy development. This brings the chance to develop and enhance key transferable skills in engagement and influencing and in building and writing for different audiences. The placement will provide an insight into how the Library and other public bodies manage their reputation and engage with stakeholders, in particular with central Government.

The student would also be encouraged to attend staff training events such as those provided by the Digital Scholarship and Training teams and the regular staff talks given as part of the Library's 21st Century Curators series. Throughout the placement, there will be opportunities to meet other research fellows, placement students and collaborative doctoral researchers based at the Library.

Required knowledge and skills

The skills required to undertake this placement would be commensurate with a PhD candidate's profile – i.e. strong research and analytical skills. The placement would suit a candidate who is keen to develop their communications and influencing skills. We welcome applications from PhD candidates from any disciplinary background and are keen to hear from anyone who might offer new perspectives on our work.

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>