

Job Description

Job Title: Postdoctoral Research Assistant: *Enlightenment Architectures*
Reports to: Kim Sloan, Project Leader & Principal Investigator: *Enlightenment Architectures*
Department: P&D
Grade: C3C
Term: Fixed Term: 28 months in duration



The Leverhulme Trust

Main Purpose of Job:

The postdoctoral research associate will be responsible, along with another PDRA already in post, for contributing to *Enlightenment Architectures: Sir Hans Sloane's catalogues of his collections*, a Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant to the British Museum working closely with Digital Humanities and Information Studies colleagues at UCL, led by the Co-Investigator, Julianne Nyhan.

The objective of this project is to understand the intellectual structures of Sloane's catalogues and with them the origins of the Enlightenment disciplines and information management practices they helped to shape. The project will employ a pioneering combination of traditional Humanities and Digital Humanities research to examine Sloane's catalogues which reveal the way he and his contemporaries collected, organized and classified the world, through their descriptions, cross-references and codes.

Having specialist knowledge in the history of collecting, the history of science, information history or a relevant field, the two post holders will assist with the process of digitally encoding externally sourced transcriptions of six of Sir Hans Sloane's manuscript catalogues from the British Museum, British Library and Natural History Museum and assist with identifying information entities within them which will inform their research.

They will conduct a literature review, create a project archive, carry out contextual and comparative case study research and analyse Sloane's collaborative networks as preparation for the production of the project's minimum of four co-authored peer-reviewed publications, to be ready for publication by the end of the project. The job holders will also have some administrative tasks and will be responsible for regular progress reports, organizing informal and formal workshops and keeping a project website up to date.

Key Responsibilities:

- Develop and assist with the delivery of major pieces of research on Sloane's manuscript catalogues
- Quality control and checking of externally-sourced transcriptions against the manuscript catalogues; document analysis and contributing to the elaboration of an encoding scheme; assisting with the encoding of the transcriptions and contributing to an ontology for early modern collections

- Carry out a literature review and research on comparable case studies
- Contribute to the production of peer-reviewed publications arising from the research carried out
- Create a project archive and produce regular progress and research reports
- Contributing to the project website
- Organizing, attending and contributing to all project workshops
- Any other tasks, including administrative, as required of the role

What are the main work pressures and challenges?

- Playing an important role in delivering a large and complex interdisciplinary collections-based research project working closely with Digital Humanities
- Ability to work independently, using initiative to solve problems with a minimum of referral and with attention to detail and accuracy
- Ability and willingness to undertake additional training and to learn and implement new skills as necessary
- Meeting regular progress targets
- Working with other contributors, research assistants and collaborators in other departments of the Museum and other institutions to guarantee the timely delivery of publications and electronic resources
- Liaison with research partners across the project to facilitate and contribute to the delivery of the interdisciplinary outputs.

Key Dimensions:

- Working with the PDRA, PI and Co-I to develop a well-planned deliverable programme of work within the project.
- Liaison with the other investigators and research assistants to help generate the intellectual and logistical synergy needed for the success of the project.
- Co-development and delivery of a coordinated programme for the encoding of the transcriptions and ensuring its completion.

What are the performance targets or standards?

- Meeting the agreed outputs and outcomes for the project as contained in the project application and as agreed with project Investigators, including research publications
- Regular attendance and active participation in weekly project meetings.
- Submitting accurate reports to meet agreed deadlines and timetables.

What changes are likely to occur in the next two years to this job?

- The project is fully funded with the budget calculated, although the budget is tight. Tasks and targets may be modified, as the nature of the work may change over time in line with the changing focus of the research. It is anticipated that work will begin with document checking of the externally sourced transcriptions of the catalogue, the refining of the project's encoding specification and the mark-up of the transcriptions. The RAs will, at the same time, conduct literature reviews and analysis while assembling a project archive. Research and analysis of the encoded transcriptions, comparative case studies and Sloane's networks will lead to the preparation of publications. Workshops (both formal and informal) will be organized as required. Flexibility, an openness to new ideas and the ability to learn quickly will be required at all stages of the project.

Who are the main contacts of the jobholder and what are the relationships to these contacts?

- The job-holder will be under the line management of the project's principal investigator, with delegation as appropriate.
- The job-holder will work closely with the PI and Co-I and her doctoral research student, and with two other research assistants in the project, contributing to inter-disciplinary exchange and project synergy and will liaise and engage directly with other staff across the Museum and wider research community internationally as necessary.
- They will provide the project's PI and Co-I and the senior RA with administrative assistance in relevant areas to ensure that British Museum administrative processes and reporting to the funder (Leverhulme Trust) are carried out effectively and efficiently.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Education – levels & subjects	Completed PhD in History of Science, History of Collecting, Enlightenment Studies, Information History, Digital Humanities or other relevant field	Evidence of research that crosses disciplinary boundaries. Familiarity with Digital Humanities resources, technologies and research in the Cultural Heritage sector (e.g. collections, manuscripts)
Other qualifications	Fluency in spoken and written English and reading proficiency in Latin and/or at least one modern language relevant to project research. Research experience in archives with proven palaeographic skills.	Knowledge of other European languages. Knowledge of relevant published sources, literature and websites for research
Specific technical / professional skills & experience	Scholarly ability. Experience with project teams. Broad knowledge of electronic text and especially digital cultural heritage resources for the 17 th and 18 th century. Experience of using computing to manage a research project including tasks such as digital file management and version control; the use of collaborative workspaces; and or research management tools	Some knowledge of, or experience of, working with TEI, XML and / or Semantic Web technologies and Linked Open Data more generally. Some knowledge of, or experience of working with museum collection databases and / or the use of ontologies in the cultural heritage sector Creating and editing websites and using social media for knowledge dissemination.
Work experience, likely former jobs	Previous research and/or teaching and/or curatorial experience in history of collecting, history of science, history of information, digital humanities or museum studies.	Experience of Digital Humanities or Digital Information Studies projects that designed or interrogated digital cultural heritage textual resources relating to the Enlightenment
Specific managerial skills	Demonstrated ability to plan and write scholarly work and to organize own work in order to meet targets.	Ability to work in collaborative projects involving multiple researchers and authors.
Specific interpersonal skills	Excellent teamwork and ability to work closely and diplomatically with research partners and museum colleagues. Good verbal and written communication skills and ability to speak publically about research to scholarly and wider audiences.	Organisational ability in a variety of contexts.
Publications record (if appropriate)	Own academic publication in preparation or already published.	One or more peer-reviewed articles.

Employee Benefits

Salary

The agreed starting salary for this post is non-negotiable and clearly stated on the advert and covering letter. Normal salary arrangements apply for internal applicants upon promotion or level transfer.

Pension Benefits

British Museum employees are eligible to join the Civil Service pension schemes, you will be provided with information to assist you in making your choice.

Hours

Full time roles are based on a 5 day week of 41 hours including a daily lunch break of one hour. Part-time employees are paid on their net hours excluding lunch breaks.

Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance is 25 days, rising to 30 days after 10 years service. The annual leave year commences on 1 April and new staff will receive their annual leave allowance on joining. In addition there are 10 ½ days public and privileges days. Leave for part-time staff will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Additional Benefits

Are subject to change but currently include access to a subsidised restaurant, the opportunity to purchase books, replicas and other items from the Museum shops at discount prices. Museum staff also have access to a Personal Support Service through Workplace Options. There are free eye tests for VDT users and assistance with the purchase of glasses if appropriate

Season Ticket or Bicycle Loan

After two months in post, staff on permanent contracts (or contracts longer than two years) will be eligible to apply for an interest free loan to purchase a season ticket or bicycle

Guidance Notes for Applicants

These notes are intended to guide you through The British Museum's application procedure and help you to participate in the selection process as effectively as possible. Please read these notes carefully before completing your application.

Job Description/Person Specification

The job description and person specification that outline the purpose, main duties and responsibilities of the job as well as the knowledge, skills and experience that we are looking for. It is essential that you read the person specification thoroughly before completing the application form so that you are able to assess how your experience fits with the requirements for the post.

Application Form

The first stage of the selection process is your completion of the application form. This allows us to shortlist applicants for interview and provides a basis for the interview itself. To ensure fairness to all applicants, any decision during the initial sift is based solely upon the information that you include in your application form.

ELIGIBILITY TO WORK IN THE UK

Please ensure that you give details of any restrictions that you have to work in the EU. If you are selected for interview you will be asked to provide us with proof of your eligibility to work in the UK (e.g. passport or Home Office visa). Additionally, under the asylum and immigration act, we are required to check that anyone taking up employment with us has the legal right to work in the EU.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Please give details of your full educational career including any qualifications that you have obtained and any further scholarships/awards that you feel would help your application.

EMPLOYMENT

Please give details of all of your previous employment for the past 10 years, beginning with your current/most recent post. If you are successful after interview we will need to contact your last employer and another previous employer before we are able to offer you the post.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is your opportunity to give us any further additional information about why you have applied for this post, including experience that you feel is relevant to the main tasks and essential criteria, as outlined in the job description and person specification.

DECLARATION

It is essential that you read the declaration before submitting your application form. Successful candidates may be disqualified later if any information given on the application form is found to be false.

Short Listing

Short listing prior to interview will take place as soon as possible after the closing date for applications and will be carried out by at least two people. Short listing will be based upon how closely candidates have demonstrated they fit the criteria, as set out on the job description and person specification.

Interview

Short listed candidates will be normally contacted by email and given details of the interview date, time, location and any special requirements. If you are able to attend the interview you must confirm with the Human Resources that you wish to do so. The interview process may vary from post to post, any activities such as tests or presentations that we require you to undertake as part of the selection process will be outlined in your invitation to interview.

Offer of Employment

All offers of employment from The British Museum are subject to satisfactory references, health and security clearances.

Data Protection

Information that you provide for the purpose of your application will be used as part of the recruitment process. Any data supplied will be held securely and access restricted to those involved in dealing with your application and the recruitment and selection process. Once this process is completed, the data relating to unsuccessful applicants will be stored for a maximum of 6 months and then destroyed. If you are the successful candidate, your application form will be retained and form the basis of your personnel record. Information provided on the Diversity Monitoring Form will be used to monitor The British Museum's equal opportunities policy and practices.

All processing of personal data by The British Museum is undertaken in accordance with the principles of the 1998 Data Protection Act. For more information please go to:
<http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/corporate/guidance/DataProtectionCodeofPractice.pdf>