Conceptualising the Library Collection for the Digital World:
A Case Study of Social Enterprise

We are seeking a PhD student to investigate what the concept of a library collection means in the digital world. You should have experience of working in an academic or research library, an interest in library collections and a Masters degree in librarianship or a related subject. The position is available from October 2010 and offers an outstanding opportunity for a dedicated and motivated student to undertake groundbreaking research in collaboration with the national library of the UK. The studentship is funded (fees and maintenance) for three years by a Concordat Scholarship for projects drawing on the holdings and expertise of the British Library, arising from the special relationship between the Library and the University of Sheffield.

The project supervisors are:

- Sheila Corrall, Professor of Librarianship & Information Management,
  The Information School, University of Sheffield

- Peter Marsh, Professor of Child & Family Welfare and Academic Director,
  University of Sheffield Enterprise

- Sue Ashpitel, Collections Manager, Business & Intellectual Property,
  The British Library

Closing date for applications: midnight on **Friday 16 July 2010**.

Interviews will be held in London at The British Library on **Thursday 22 July 2010**.

Project details

Collections have traditionally been seen as the defining characteristic of libraries and central to the practice of librarianship, but digital developments have introduced new information artefacts that challenge established patterns of ownership and control. Libraries now mediate access to information collaboratively by licensing and harvesting web-based content and their roles overlap with other stakeholders; the British Library has a collecting and a 'connecting' strategy. The research will focus on Social Enterprise as a growing economic sector and contemporary interdisciplinary field, where information relevant to researchers, policymakers and practitioners is distributed among different subject areas, publication categories and formats, presenting problems that typify collection definition and management in the digital world.

The project objectives are to:

- investigate how library practitioners, information seekers and other stakeholders perceive the concept, its functions and parameters; and

- determine whether 'collection' is a meaningful term in the (socially) networked digital environment.

The proposal builds on a recent collaborative internship project that employed a Librarianship graduate to develop a framework for a social enterprise collection and options for an information hub at the British Library. Proposed research methods include document analysis, interviews and focus groups, using the existing project partnership to involve academic, national and public library constituencies.

Qualifications and skills

- A good honours degree at undergraduate level (first class or high upper-second class) and a Masters degree in librarianship/information science (with good performance in the research component). Students due to complete a Masters degree this summer may apply.

- Knowledge of and experience of working in an academic or research library, together with a demonstrable interest in library collections and an understanding of the role of national libraries and their contribution to research and enterprise.

- Familiarity with qualitative and quantitative research methods.

- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral; effective interpersonal skills, to liaise with project participants and other stakeholders; and good organisational skills, with proven ability to work to and meet deadlines.

Funding details

The award covers the full cost of university tuition fees at the UK/EU rate, a maintenance grant at the standard University of Sheffield rate (£13,650 for 2010-11, rising incrementally thereafter) and a training grant of £500 per year.

How to apply

Please email your application direct to Prof Sheila Corrall (s.m.corrall@sheffield.ac.uk), no later than midnight on **Friday 16 July 2010**. Your application should include:

- a covering letter explaining your motivation for undertaking doctoral research, your interest in this particular project and the expertise that you can bring to the project

- a full curriculum vitae

- an example of recent written work that demonstrates your research ability and writing skills (for example, a student assignment, project report or published article)

- contact details, including email addresses, for two referees, at least one of whom should be able to comment on your academic ability.

More information

If you want additional information or have questions about the project or the application process, please contact Prof Sheila Corrall (email s.m.corrall@sheffield.ac.uk).

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