



Job Description

Research Fellow in Participatory Research and Collections as Data

Grade: 7 £36,770 to £44,388 per annum (including London Allowance)

Department: Information Studies

Location: Bloomsbury Campus

Reports to

Professor Julianne Nyhan (PI Sloane Lab)

Start date: as soon as possible

End Date: 30th September 2024

The post is funded until 30th September 2024 in the first instance.

Context

We are seeking to appoint a Research Fellow to contribute to "The Sloane Lab: Looking back to build future shared collections", led by UCL in partnership with the British Museum (BM) and Natural History Museum (NHM). The Sloane Lab project has been funded under the 'Towards a National Collection' call, which has seen the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) award £14.5m to 5 research projects to connect the UK's cultural artefacts and historical archives in new and transformative ways. The aim of the programme is to use new technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) to reveal the first insights into how thousands of disparate collections could be explored by public audiences and academic researchers in the future.

The Sloane Lab will focus on the vast collections of Sir Hans Sloane in public institutions, and work with expert and interested communities including museum audiences to link the present with the past to allow the links between Sloane's collections and catalogues to be re-established across the Natural History Museum, the British Library, and the British Museum (plus others that have relevant material). The main outcome of the project will be a freely

available, online digital lab – the Sloane lab – that will offer researchers, curators and the public new opportunities to search, explore, and engage critically with key questions about our digital cultural heritage.

The Sloane Lab aims to enrich debate on issues such as: the contested nature of museum collections, the role of digital tools in foregrounding overlooked or ignored processes, like imperialism, colonialism, slavery, loss and destruction, that have shaped the UK's national collections.

This advertised role offers an exciting opportunity for researchers to work with experts and communities to link up Sloane's collections, to put them in context for the 21st century, and open new opportunities to search, explore and engage critically with the UK's cultural heritage online.

We encourage applications from those who are underrepresented in the sector and at UCL including but, not exclusive, to disabled, D/deaf and neurodiverse people, LGBTQ+ people, people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, especially women.

Main purpose of the job

The main purpose of this post is to research, plan and facilitate a series of participatory events with diverse communities and institutions and to conduct research on the history of the Sloane collection. The post holder will undertake research and development at the forefront of collections as data and digital humanities and are expected to have a background in participatory methodology and research design.

Duties and responsibilities

Main Duties

- Work directly with different interested communities to co-design the Sloan Lab participatory events, to suggest the questions that these events might address and to participate in the selection of participants. This work is expected to engage c. 286 participants over the c. 36 months of the project.
- Facilitate and contribute to workshops, focus groups; conduct interviews and devise questionnaires or other relevant research instruments as necessary to to engage and deploy community knowledge in the development of the project.
- Conduct historical and collections as data-driven research as part of a collaborative case study on the Sloane collection's representation and acknowledgement of its colonial contexts that will be collaboratively undertaken by NHM, BM and UCL.
- Conduct, and write up, systematic literature reviews as required to inform the research design of Sloane Lab and the wider project.
- The Sloane Lab will appoint 'Community Fellows' to undertake creative, critical and/or research-led projects on Sloane's collections, demonstrating the new forms of analysis and interpretation the project will unlock. The PDRA will support Community Fellows to develop a detailed project plan and support them as appropriate.
- Collaborate with research colleagues across the project, including the Community Engagement Consultant, to support the aims of the Sloane Lab.
- Support the research and writing of an impact case study on the Activities of the project.
- Develop or contribute to co-authored contributions, including presenting findings to conferences and seminars and publishing in peer-reviewed academic journals.

Other Duties

- Contributing to report writing and documentation of digital outputs.
- Contribute to the public and professional engagement activities of the project, Including the documenting of the scale and impact of those events
- Complete mandatory training courses that may be required to comply with UCL policy for research fellows.
- Actively follow UCL policies, including Equal Opportunities.
- Contribute to the overall activities of the Department and collaborate with other UCL initiatives as appropriate
- Comply at all times with UCL policies including Equal Opportunities, Race Equality, and regulations on Fire, Health and Safety, Data Protection and Research Ethics.
- Carry out any other duties within the scope, spirit and purpose of the project as may be reasonably required by the Principal Investigator and the DIS Head of Department.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessment method (Application/Interview)
Knowledge and Experience		
Experience of Participatory Methodology research design	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of conducting qualitative research, including experience of devising workshops and/or focus groups, questionnaires and conducting interviews.	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of organising public and professional facing events, and documenting the reach and significance (impact) of those activities.	Essential	Application/Interview
Good understanding of Collections as Data scholarship and projects	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of using, critiquing and applying Digital Humanities tools and techniques for working with large data sets	Essential	Application/Interview
Some familiarity with the history of the UK National Collection and / or the Sloane collection	Desirable	Application/Interview
Experience working with museum and/or cultural heritage data collections	Desirable	Application/Interview
Skills and Abilities		
Proven ability and commitment to carry out high quality original research	Essential	Application/Interview
Proven research aptitude	Essential	Application/Interview
Demonstrate excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills	Essential	Application/Interview
Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small scale project management, to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines.	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of presenting research to variety of academic and public audiences	Essential	Application/Interview
Ability to write research reports clearly and quickly	Desirable	Application/Interview
Ability to develop new techniques and projects	Desirable	Application/Interview
Personal attributes		
Ability to work as part of a multidisciplinary team, collaborate with researchers in different disciplines, and engage with non-academic partners	Essential	Application/Interview
The highest ethical and professional standards in research	Essential	Application/Interview
Highly self-motivated and hard working	Essential	Application/Interview

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Assessment method (Application/Interview)
Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in continuous professional development.	Essential	Application/Interview
Ability to exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.	Desirable	Application/Interview
Education and Professional Qualifications		
PhD degree in Digital Humanities, Information Science, History of Collections or related discipline (or about to complete) or equivalent research experience	Essential	Application/Interview
Postdoctoral research experience	Desirable	Application/Interview