

Museums and Collections Projects Program 2021

University of Melbourne

Medical History Museum

Project Description

Exhibitions Research project, Medical History Museum

The Project

This project offers the opportunity for students to assist the Senior Curator in researching themes and identifying potential items in the collection to be included in upcoming exhibitions at the [Medical History Museum](#).

Background

Since its opening in 1967, the [Medical History Museum's](#) collection has grown substantially through the donation of documents, photographs, instruments, and records from medical graduates, families and institutions in and around Melbourne. Originally the collection mainly reflected the teaching of medicine at the University of Melbourne and its clinical schools, and the achievements of its graduates from the 1860s to the present day. However, the donation in 1971 of the 19th century Savory and Moore Pharmacy, through a further grant from the Wellcome Trust, and the 1994 acquisition of the Australian Medical Association collection, has seen the scope of the museum broadened to reflect the history of medical practice in Victoria, and more generally the development of Western medicine. The purpose of the museum is to encourage appreciation and understanding of the history of medicine and its role in society. The museum stimulates active learning about the history of medicine through research, teaching, and dialogue among communities of students, faculty, scholars, alumni, and the wider public.

The [Medical History Museum](#) runs a changing exhibition program that encompasses a broad range of themes linking scientific discovery with society and culture. Exhibitions include historical and contemporary issues examining the role of medicine in society. A diverse approach is taken to the areas explored by the exhibition program covering public health, significant medical innovations and catalysts for change in society. Future themes will include the cultural and social impact of certain medical conditions and attitudes to changing practices.

Details

Under the supervision of the Director, the student/s will assist in researching a theme for an upcoming exhibition. Through the project there will be the opportunity to research collection material, develop a list of suggested works for inclusion and write extended labels on selected objects. The student/s can assist with the layout, design and the physical installation of the exhibition, along with other tasks that relate to the mounting of the exhibition. This project would suit students who have an interest in medical history and an understanding of collection management principles specific to the documentation of museum objects (progress towards a degree in Art Curatorship and/or previous volunteer experience with an Archive, Museum or Historical Society would be ideal). Knowledge of the correct procedures for the safe handling of objects is required as is a methodical, prudent approach with a keen eye for detail.

Benefits

Opportunity to work at close hand with one of the University of Melbourne's extensive cultural collections and for professional development through experience gained in curatorial and collection management procedures and practice. This includes experience in handling museum objects as well as the creation of intellectual content. Good public exposure of the exhibition which will be seen by many high-profile visitors, students and members of the academic and general community.

Supervisor

Dr Jacqueline Healy, Director Museums – Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

