

## Experience of shared positions at The University of Melbourne and Monash University libraries

The University of Melbourne Library / Monash University Library

Japanese Studies Librarian

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For the past year I have been involved in a unique collaboration between The University of Melbourne Library and Monash University Sir Louis Matheson Library. There has been an agreement to share the two specialist library positions of the Chinese and Japanese studies librarians. The Chinese studies librarian who is appointed by the University of Melbourne attends 4 days a week at Melbourne and one day a week at Monash. As for myself, the Japanese librarian, I attend 4 days a week at Monash and 1 day a week at Melbourne. So far we are one year into the initial agreement of three years.

The first year of the appointment of the two librarians in these new roles has been quite a success. It has required flexibility, a lot of planning and being able to commute between two libraries in different locations. Time management has been key when planning schedules. It requires clear communication skills with both libraries' supervisors, Arts team members, academics and students. It also requires two identification cards and two sets of passwords to remember. I have had the luxury of having my own desk at both locations as well.

From my experience so far, I can see that the two university library collections have some similarities, but they also have some significant differences. The University of Melbourne Library's East Asian Collection consists of Chinese and Japanese language resources and has needed quite a lot of attention to re-establish the floor planning and re-classifying to Library of Congress specification with the interfiling of two languages on the shelves. It also requires upgrading to full catalogue records for an easily discoverable and accessible resource collection with clear signs and guides to help students and researchers navigate the library floor. Monash Library's Asian Collections consists of Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Malay and Cambodian collections. It has been established and stabilised with Dewey Classification, shelved by each language collection and has now moved into its recently renovated location. Both university library collections do not have a service point with subject librarians nearby. Inquiries from users are made at a general information point, or preferably to subject librarians via email or phone calls.

Understanding the collection policy and different library systems of The University of Melbourne, and Monash University libraries became the main priority in my role when I first started. After two years of absence of a Japanese specialist at The University of Melbourne Library, there was a large backlog of ordering and cataloguing of the Japanese resources to be done. Also for both libraries there is the need for ongoing ordering and cataloguing of new acquisitions manually entered into the library system as Japanese language resources still rely heavily on print. At Monash there is an immediate need to establish a new workflow procedure for ordering and cataloguing, and I am currently working on this with the Information Resource team. The trend in Japanese studies is constantly changing, so it is important to maintain a very broad range of subjects related to Japan in the collection to make it a

valuable resource for users. The selection is mainly based on the area of university teaching courses and the interests of researchers at the time. One of the advantages of looking after two collections at the same time is the ability to avoid duplication between the two university libraries, unless it is an essential resource for a specific course. This saves library space and Inter-library loans, and document delivery services become an important service. With the increasing number of print items collected over the past 50 to 60 years of history in both collections, it became imperative to move low use resources to an Offsite Storage. This allows better use of the limited space in the library. I believe this process requires a full record with both Romanization and Japanese Characters included. This will achieve an easily discoverable and accessible collection for academics and students. There is still a need for further development and maintenance of the collections at both libraries. So it is an ongoing process of refinement and learning how to better utilise both of these rich and comprehensive collections.

Another part of my role is academic outreach within both universities. As I am at The University of Melbourne for just one day a week it has become particularly important to actively keep in regular contact. This is mostly achieved via email, but sometimes face to face meetings are required. Once the new semester begins for both universities, I am involved in individual research consultations, academic research support and also teaching where required. Updating information in LibGuides for collections and some individual courses was also initiated at both universities. After several meetings we have created instructional videos for using databases and we have launched self-learning online teaching tools for finding resources in the library catalogue for various languages. There has also been an ongoing need for academic research support. The University of Melbourne Library assists with publication citation analysis and other metrics to support grant proposals. This encourages academics to stay up-to-date with citation databases and individual profiles to connect with the university's repository system.

In 2017, the second year of the collaboration between the two university libraries, there is still much to learn and familiarise myself with in this unique work situation. The opportunity to be involved with the University of Melbourne and Monash University libraries and see first-hand the different approaches and views of both universities, has been a rewarding experience which has helped me better identify the future needs of both collections.