

Getting an international library job

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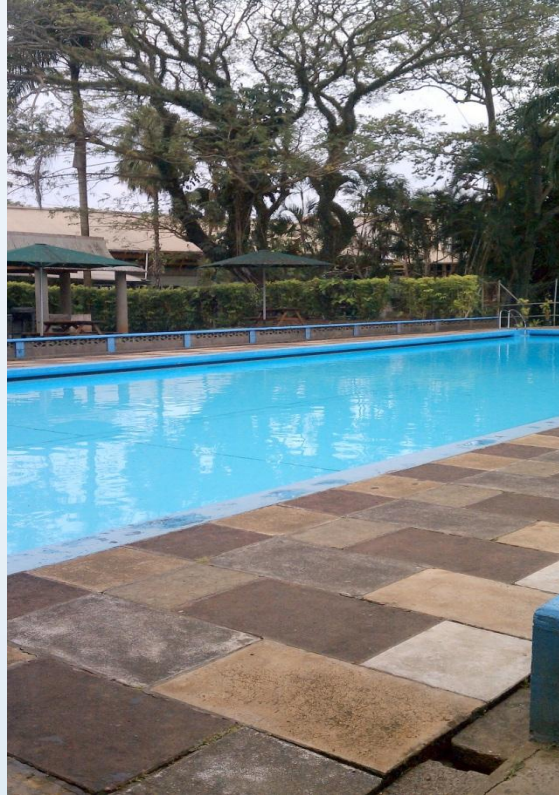


2012-2015 : Librarian at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

My international job story



Typical Pay and Perks



Do not convert the local salary into US dollars to determine if the pay is good. Cost of living varies wildly!

Why consider a foreign job?

- **adventure/travel**
- **immerse yourself in another culture**
- **get more work experience**
- **high pay (for jobs in the Middle East)**
- **less competitive than US jobs**
- **will often hire new grads/people without FT experience**
- **Jobs are on a contract basis (usually 2-3 years, usually renewable)**

Why do libraries hire expat staff?

- **No MLIS programs in country**
- **Lack of locals with MLIS degree**
- **Seeking Western educated / native English speakers
(International school libraries)**
- **Need to meet accreditation standards for faculty/staff hires**

How did I choose USP/Fiji? Why did they pick -me-?

- Laid off from library job in 2010 post-recession; job market locally was terrible; had temp jobs for 2 years
- If I have to move for a job, let's go BIG
- Went to Fiji on my honeymoon, but also went to non-resort areas to see "the real Fiji"
- Interview panel impressed that I'd visited non-tourist areas, so I had an idea what Suva would be like
- Offered 3 year contract; knowing it was short term made the decision to go easier

Could YOU get this job?

Head Librarian- Job post from March 6, 2023

DESIRED EXPERIENCE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Education: An advanced degree in library science. Masters of Library and Information Science preferred.

Experience: The candidate should have a minimum of 2-3 years of work experience as a librarian. Supervisory experience is an asset.

Knowledge and Skills: Skilled in library organization and management, including training and supervising staff (including student workers). Good knowledge of integrated library systems, reference and research assistance, database searching, etc. Strong interpersonal skills.

Personal attributes: Hard working, active interest in providing high-quality service, excellent oral and written English language skills, attention to detail and ability to build others' knowledge and enthusiasm for effective information retrieval. International experience is very desirable, but not essential.

Head Librarian

The Head Librarian will manage the planning, administrative, management and budgetary functions of the college's library services.

Library Management

- Train, supervise, evaluate and recruit as necessary a team of library workers (including a local librarian and assistant librarian and numerous student workers)
- Manage all library activities and take full responsibility for the library services of the college, including the safety and security of the library's facilities and resources
- Manage & develop convenient, accessible library & information services, both in-person and virtual
- Analyze and evaluate library and information services,
- Manage library expenditures
- Explore possible grants and other fundraising to enhance the library's collection and functioning

Service Provision

- Provide library and information-literacy training and instruction for students and staff including the use of digital library services like e-books and online resources, etc.
- Provide and ensure provision of reference and research assistance
- Organize outreach activities to stimulate use of the library's programs and services

Technical Services

Manage the integrated library system

Direct all cataloging and collection management work

Manage collection development and acquisition of non-textbook new materials

Manage materials on reserve for college courses

Update and maintain the Virtual Library website

Head Librarian, Royal Thimphu College (Bhutan, Thimphu)

SALARY AND START DATE

Salary will be at local rate and paid in local currency (Ngultrums). The amount depends on qualifications and experience, but will be in the \$500-1,000 US/month range depending on degree, relevant experience, etc. Desired start date is July 2023 or thereabouts. Some flexibility is possible. A 3 year contract is desirable and roundtrip airfare will be covered with a two-year contract.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Royal Thimphu College (RTC) is located just 6 miles outside of Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan, in a peaceful natural environment. Summers are pleasant and warm while winters are cold but sunny and clear. Thimphu, at an altitude of about 7,000 feet, has a population of just over 100,000 people including resident expatriates from many countries. Access to Thimphu, which has numerous restaurants and shops as well as the country's best medical facilities, is provided by city bus service. Housing is available for many of the faculty and staff on or right near campus. RTC provides assistance with arranging such housing if that is desired. **A housing allowance is included in the contract terms.**

What types of jobs are available?

- Mostly academic libraries, BUT not just reference and instruction: also
 - technical services and cataloguing
 - administration
 - systems
- international school librarians (recruit via job fairs)
- ~~foreign public library jobs~~ BUT university libraries will often hire public librarians.
- University jobs tend to be in developing countries w/English language instruction /schools with US study abroad programs; you are unlikely to get a job in Western Europe

Is an international job for you? Caveats:

- **Access to healthcare: Prescription availability?
Specialists available?**
- **LGBTQIA+ applicants may not be welcome by the host nation**
- **Religion -is your faith established in the host country?
Are non-believers accepted/acknowledged?**
- **Food issues - Are Allergies/GF/vegans accommodated?**
- **Have a sleepover, go to jail: in most of the Middle East, you can be arrested, jailed, and then deported for having sex out of wedlock (or having an overnight guest of the opposite gender)**

Your pets (probably) can't come with you



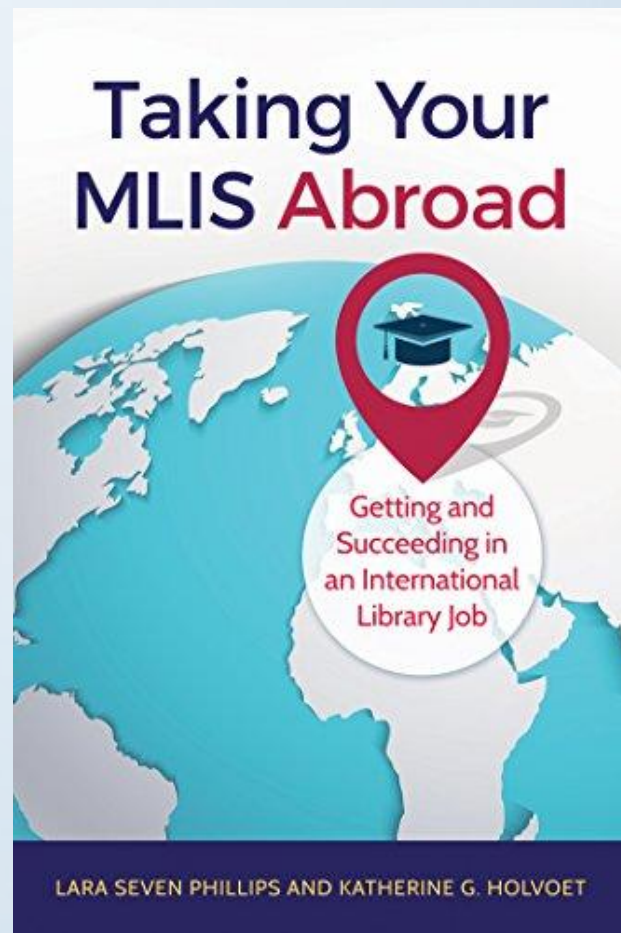
Importing cats or dogs may be onerous and expensive, if it is even possible. Find out what the restrictions/ requirements are before accepting an offer.

The Shameless Plug

I wished I had a handbook before I took my international job.

There was almost nothing out there.

So I wrote one with another expat librarian who worked in the UAE.



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