

# **University of Maryland Libraries Student Employee Guidelines**

LBSC635

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## **Introduction**

Our original assignment was to work with McKeldin librarians to implement a cross-training program for staff in the university libraries. Our main contact was Gary White who suggested we also contact Cinthya Ippoliti and Sharon Epps who work in McKeldin library. At our initial meeting we became aware that the cross-training program was a bigger project than we anticipated and also the project that an entire committee was working on. After our meeting with Cinthya and Sharon and due to conflicting project timelines, our project was due before theirs, we settled on the student library employee project. Cinthya and Sharon put us in contact with Judi Kidd who is the student employee supervisor at McKeldin. Judi sent us a list of eight deliverables and we started working immediately. Our first step was to interview student employees at other libraries both on and off campus. We split up the libraries and interviewed one or two employees at each to get a general understanding at current standards for training and communication tools. Based on interviews, each library student employee system varied, which helped us gain perspective of what we needed to create.

We each worked on two of the eight deliverables. During our process we met as a group several times to work together and to identify questions we had for Cinthya, Sharon and Judi. We met with all three of them two weeks before the project was due to give them a summary of what we already accomplished.

Our eight deliverables include a formal job description, contract of behavior for students, probationary period guidelines, policies for regular evaluation sessions, a daily task list for students at work, a student directory, a student communication portal, and feedback forms for faculty or staff.

## **Job Description<sup>1</sup>**

Judi Kidd, student supervisor for McKeldin library, sent us past job descriptions and lists of duties that student employees received during training. We used those past documents to create a new well-rounded formal job description. We took the “McKeldin Circulation/Reserves Library Student Job Description,” 2010 edition, and used it as our template for how to create a formal job description that all University of Maryland libraries could utilize. To that end, we changed the title of the position to “UMD Libraries Circulation/Reserves Student Assistant Job Description.”

The job summary did not originally include how the position intended to teach students valuable customer service and communications skills that would benefit them in their future careers therefore we added it, as per the suggestion of our clients.

We also added the primary duties from a previous job description, which provides an up-to-date list of expected responsibilities from the students. We simplified some wording for better understanding because we realized that not all students are familiar with formal library practices or wording. For example, we specifically identified Aleph as the library catalog and shelf-reading as making sure the books are in order as arranged by Library of Congress classification call number.

Under “Minimum Qualifications,” which includes educational background, we omitted the “College Park” reference because this new student job description also applies to Priddy Library on the Shady Grove campus.

We toned down the “Required Knowledge/Skills/Ability” section to keep the document under one page and because some skills, like Library of Congress Classification system, can be learned on the job.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix (Job Description)

Finally, we added a “Salary” section stating that the pay rate varies based on experience and job duties, as per the suggestion of our clients.

### **Contract of Behavior for Students<sup>2</sup>**

We primarily worked from the 2012 edition of the “Student Employee Guidelines” document to create the “Student Employee Contract” contract. Occasionally we inserted copy from separate documentation for desk expectations at the McKeldin circulation desk. We also cross-referenced our own document deliverables; including a mention of the student communication and scheduling portal under scheduled hours, and a reference to the probationary period guidelines.

We added “Daily Expectations,” gleaned material from the document outlining circulation/reserves desk expectations and cross-referencing our “Daily Task List” deliverable. We also noted proper behavior expectations while working at the circulation desk.

We edited the “Limited Distractions” section to emphasize that student employees are not to use cell phones and personal laptops while on the job, and added in a caveat that electronic devices should be put on silent mode.

We also noted the importance of not sharing patrons’ personal information and stressing that it is against federal law to do so.

Our process for the contract centered on consolidating two documents already in use. This meant deleting extraneous information for both spacing and clarity to highlight the major points of the document. We also cross-referenced to our own deliverables so that these documents can work naturally as a team. At the end of the document we include lines for

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix (Student Employee Contract)

signatures and dates as requested by our clients. The contract is two pages long, meaning it can be printed on one sheet of paper, front and back.

### **Probationary Period & Evaluation**<sup>3</sup>

We interviewed student employees at different libraries on and off campus to understand what current probationary and evaluation practices there were in place already. After learning that students were not aware of any such practices we asked our client, Judi. First we asked, “Is there already a probationary period installed?” She answered, “no,” so we began building from the ground up. Our follow-up question was “What kind of probationary period are you interested in installing?” We saw there were two choices: the first, an academic probation. If the student worker’s GPA drops below a specific number, then the student is on an academic probation until the end of the semester. Second, work probation. Like many jobs today, when people are first hired, they are put into a probationary period so that the supervisor can observe the worker and terminate the position if needed. Judi chose the second option and the form was drawn-up.

First, we looked at other schools, specifically within the Big Ten Conference, to see what practices they were already employing. We were able to find documents from only a few schools about probationary measures. Unfortunately, none of the forms were directed toward students, but they provided an excellent guide for creating the actual document. We used the guidelines for probation at University of New Mexico, which was the only university we found with probation for student workers, as a foundation. During a two month time period, the student has the freedom to decide if the job fits their schedule and their goals, and may leave with little notice. After the two-month period, the student must give two weeks notice before quitting the job. During this two-month period, the supervisor also has the ability to monitor the student and

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix (Performance and Probationary Evaluation Form)

gauge whether the student will be a good fit for the job. The supervisor may release the worker with little notice. One document has been created, combining the probationary evaluation and the regular evaluation sessions.

### **Regular Evaluations**<sup>4</sup>

To add more clarification, we asked Judi, Cinthya and Sharon, “Are there current guidelines for regular evaluation?” Their response was, “It depends on the supervisor and unit. Ideally, there should be three during a semester: the first month, the middle of the semester and the final month.” Based on their response, we recommended meeting with every student the final month of each semester. In our opinion there are too many students within the library system for the supervisor to meet with them individually three times per semester at larger libraries, however, one exception having two evaluations in one semester would be for those students on probation. Probationary students, based on the above section, receive an evaluation their second month of employment, and should receive the regular evaluation at the end of each semester.

Again, our research began by looking at guidelines endorsed by other Big Ten Conference universities. Each university only conducts evaluations once, at the end of an academic school year. If U.M.D. conducted one evaluation per semester, we would already double the effort of other universities. We found several performance evaluations forms but none were geared specifically toward the student workers, focusing instead on the staff. A university outside the Big Ten Conference, St. Mercy College, had their student evaluation form available to view. St. Mercy College conducts evaluations at the end of each academic school year. Staff review forms, provided by other schools, covered seven main points: quality of duties, teamwork and relations with others, problem solving and decision making, customer service skills,

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix (Performance and Probationary Evaluation Form)

initiative, attitude, and attendance. Using other universities' forms as guides, creating the review document was simple.

### **Daily Task List**<sup>5</sup>

The daily task list is designed to give student library employees a rundown of jobs to perform during the workday. This list is generic so any U.M.D library can use it but supervisors can amend it depending on the library, the student's job or the student's experience level. Examples include, shelving books and shelf reading, however, the first task is to ask the supervisor if there are any immediate projects that need to be done. There is also a space to record approximately how many customers the student helped so the supervisor can monitor how many customers approach the desk for internal record keeping.

Below the tasks and the customer record there are blank lines for the student to fill out what happened during their shift . Here the student can write if a customer asked a specific question and how they found the answer or if there were any problems. The note provides the supervisor a brief description of what the student accomplished during the day, allowing supervisors to gauge how much work the student did. This saves the supervisor time during the day and provides the supervisor with an account of daily work. The daily task list would be included in the library's Google Drive for students to view or for the supervisor to print off. The list is only half a page in order to conserve paper. Supervisors should provide the daily task list at the start of the shift, filled out by the student throughout their shift and returned before the student leaves. Forms can be handed directly to supervisors or supervisors may devise their own systems for collection.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix (Daily Task List)

## **Student Directory**<sup>6</sup>

The student directory is a list of current library student employees' names and contact information. One easy suggestion to present and maintain it is a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet stored on the Google Drive. Keeping it there gives supervisors access to edit the information as soon as employees start or leave. Students can view the list to contact other students when they need to switch shifts. The directory includes student's name (first and last), preferred phone number and email address. The directory can be easily amended. Supervisors can add columns to the spreadsheet if they want to add more information about students, for example, emergency contact information or student's schedules. If student shifts are dependent on the student's class schedule, then the supervisor can add a note in the spreadsheet if the student is unable to work specific days of the week. Also, the supervisor can make a note if the student is or isn't able to work weekends because of extracurricular commitments. The excel spreadsheet format can be added to other spreadsheets which means that all branches of the library system can combine their student directories.

## **Student Communication Portal and Scheduling Tools (Google Drive)**

The Google Drive offers an ideal platform for communication and scheduling for student employees. Google Drive can be used to give students access to important information and to make scheduling changes from any computer at any time. This tool ensures that student employees have access to information they may need while allowing supervisors to oversee any shift changes that students make.

Supervisors can upload files, such as job descriptions or semester schedules, to the Google Drive. Files can be organized into folders. The example drive is organized into one

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix (Student Directory)



overall folder, which can be a supervisor-only drive. This folder can be used to store items that only supervisors need, such as student employee feedback forms. Inside the overall folder each branch library has its own folder containing the same files. It is easy to determine access using the Google Drive. Access can be given for the entire folder or for each document. For example, students would have access to the folder for the library they work at and supervisors can allow students to edit specific documents while only viewing others. Access changes by checking the box next to an item and clicking the icon of a person with a plus sign; all that is needed is an e-mail address. Those without a G-Mail email address are still able to access the drive. Access type, edit or view, is changed in the same way.

Students can also use the Google Drive to set their semester schedule and to find substitutes for shifts. Supervisors can create regular semester scheduling by creating a spreadsheet with available shifts and days.<sup>7</sup> If seniority is honored, supervisors can have students sign up for shifts based on the number of semesters they have worked at the library. This can be done by providing students permission to edit at the time that they can sign up or by simply using the honor system. Supervisors can monitor changes made to the schedule to see if student employees are signing up before they should be. Students can also use the Google Drive to find substitutes for shifts they cannot work. Creating a spreadsheet can do this and having each sheet cover one week of the semester, these appear as tabs across the bottom.<sup>8</sup> Days of the week are in the first row and the hours of the day are in the first column. Students are then able to post shifts on the board with the job title and their name and others can take a shift by writing “taken by *their name*”. Supervisors can also access this information to easily keep track of shift changes.

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<sup>7</sup> See Fall Semester Schedule on the Google Drive

<sup>8</sup> See Substitute Board on the Google Drive

To ensure that students are following the same procedures for using these tools, supervisors may want to write guidelines, which can also be posted to the drive.

### **Feedback Forms**<sup>9</sup>

Providing forms for other staff to fill out regarding the actions of student employees will help students develop as employees. The libraries at University of Illinois and Ohio State University made similar forms available, which show practices that can be applied to U.M.D. University of Illinois has a performance evaluation form which the supervisor fills out using the formal job description and then meets with the employee to review. The employee signs the form to show acknowledgement but not necessarily agreement.<sup>10</sup> Ohio State University has a “kudos” page on their library website where anyone can submit the form to thank a library employee. The form asks for the employee’s name and e-mail address, a description, and the submitter’s name.<sup>11</sup> The entries are posted on the library’s website weekly.

We recommend having two forms for tracking student employees, one for when improvement is needed and one to acknowledge when student workers are doing well.

The form for positive feedback is simple, with the name of the student worker, the date, a description of the positive experience, and the name of the person submitting the form. Submitted forms can be posted somewhere that staff and especially students will see them. By acknowledging good behavior on the job in this way, behavior will be reinforced and other employees can learn what behavior is rewarded.

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix (Positive Feedback Form and Student Employee Improvement Needed Form)

<sup>10</sup> University Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. “Performance Evaluation for Non-Probation Employees,” last modified March 30, 1998, <http://www.library.illinois.edu/administration/human/pdf/evalshort.pdf>. Accessed April 25, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Ohio State University, University Libraries, Human Resources. “Kudos Recognition Program,” last modified April 11, 2013, <http://library.osu.edu/about/departments/human-resources/kudos/>. Accessed April 25, 2013.

The “Student Employee Improvement Needed” form is more official and has specific procedures in place to make sure that student employees learn how to improve. The goal is to help the student become a successful employee and learn skills that will affect their careers. We recommend this form have two sections; the top section is for other staff to fill out and can be anonymous, the bottom section is for the manager and student to fill out and includes a plan for improvement. Both the supervisor and the student would sign the form to show that a discussion occurred.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

As the library system implements standards across all branch libraries for student employees we recommend the following considerations for other possibilities to improve communication and relations between students and supervisors.

One recommendation is to establish procedures for student employees to file complaints or comments about managers. These procedures provide students with a sense of ownership and input over their jobs. This would also be an opportunity for the library system to evaluate the effectiveness of the current supervisor system and make any changes that might be needed to improve communication and relations between students and staff.

Our second recommendation is to have an experienced student serve as supervisor during all or select shifts. Students selected to serve in this capacity would be paid at a higher rate for shifts during which they supervise and may receive more training than other student employees. The student supervisor would serve as a mediator between student employees and supervisors, giving supervisors more free time. The student supervisor would be able to answer most questions and might be able to assign projects based on their independent knowledge of

student employees' skills. This would also be an opportunity for student employees to learn leadership and management skills, which can be transferred to future careers.

## Appendix

# UMD Libraries Circulation/Reserves Student Assistant Job Description

### **JOB SUMMARY**

Under direct supervision, performs routine repetitive clerical and/or non-complex library duties using manual and automated library systems. This job will teach skills in communications and customer service, all necessary to the professional world.

### **PRIMARY DUTIES**

- Provides patrons with good customer service at the circulation desk by being attentive and efficient.
- Issues and discharges circulating library materials; treats materials with sensitizing equipment for object security on return.
- Sorts and shelves materials; shelf-reads stacks to make sure books are in order based on call number.
- Searches for, and retrieves, materials from library stacks.
- Searches the library catalog, Aleph, for book details (eg return date, other copies.)
- Provides library users with basic information and directions (e.g. restrooms, photocopiers, water fountains.)
- Takes part in packaging and unpacking materials from or for other libraries.
- Other duties as assigned.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** Current Student at the University of Maryland.

### **REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS/ABILITIES**

Dedication to library policies. Skill in alphabetic and numeric filing. Ability to learn and understand library terminology and functions; to communicate effectively; to establish and maintain effective working relationships with library users and staff; to lift, transport, sort and shelf library materials; to learn how to operate standard library and office equipment, including library software, photocopiers, printers, and microform equipment.

**SALARY:** Pay rate varies based on experience.

# **Student Employee Contract**

## **Scheduled Hours**

You are responsible for working your scheduled hours. Schedules **may** be modified during exam periods and on a case-by-case basis. So that the office can continue to run without impediment, **please make advance arrangements, using the student communication and scheduling tools on Google Drive.**

## **Arrive on Time**

All student employees are expected to arrive at work on time and remain for the duration of the shift. Notify a supervisor as soon as possible if you will be late or if you are required to leave early due to an emergency or for academic reasons.

## **Probationary Period**

Every student employee is hired on a probationary period. Supervisors will discuss the Probationary Period and expectations with the students. Please see probationary guidelines for more information.

## **Daily Expectations**

Please see your daily task list for help organizing priorities. If there are books to be filed or discharged, please take care of it right away. While filing pay attention to patrons at the Circulation Desk. You are also required to shelf read, making sure that the books are in alphabetical order in the hold section. If reading at the Circulation Desk, make sure you pay attention to the patrons and regularly check for books to return or shelve. Keep reading materials inconspicuous and below eye level so as to avoid disruption in providing Public Services. Look up often and be approachable.

## **Privacy**

Under federal law, it is illegal to provide others with personal information about library patrons.

## **Breaks**

Student assistants working a shift of 6 hours or more may take two paid 15-minute breaks and an unpaid 30-minute to one hour meal break. Student assistants working a shift of 4 hours can take a 15 minute break with supervisor's or staff member's permission. The length of the meal break may vary according to work flow and individual needs. All breaks should be scheduled with the agreement of the supervisor.

### **Timesheets**

Student assistants must record the actual time when arriving and leaving work, and not when one intended or was scheduled to arrive or leave. **Your timesheet cannot be processed without your sign-off**, which indicates that the times recorded are correct.

### **Limit Distractions**

We do not tolerate student use of cell phone and personal laptops on the job. Please put your personal electronic devices on silent mode. Personal electronic devices such as headphones are not permitted in areas where we provide public services, e.g. at the Circulation Desk.

### **Be Courteous**

Please maintain a respectful and helpful attitude toward everybody, regardless of their status. ILL student positions require little interaction with the public, but it is important to maintain an air of courteousness and professionalism when these situations arise. Simply put: Be nice.

### **Use of Work Computers and Phones**

Work computers and phones should only be used for library work purposes.

### **Food and Drink Policy**

The break room may be utilized for meals and snacks only, it is not intended as a study room. The library no longer enforces a food and drink policy, but we ask that our students and staff use common sense in disposing of food packaging and beverage containers. Please clean up after yourselves. Only water in re-sealable containers is allowed in work areas.

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Evaluation		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Semester Performance Evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Probationary Evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 mo.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Spring

## Student Employee Performance and/or Probationary Evaluation

### STUDENT INFORMATION

Date Began	Student Name	Dates on Review From: _____ To: _____
Department and Title	UMD Student ID	Supervisor Name

Please fill out the evaluation below with the appropriate performance level 1-5 or Z. Definitions of the performance level are found at the top of the next page.

### EVALUATION

Performance Criteria	Performance Level	Performance Notes
<b>Quality, Accuracy, &amp; Timeliness of Duties</b> Student's work is thorough, complete, effective, and meets job expectations without constant supervision. Work is accomplished in a timely manner.		
<b>Teamwork &amp; Relations/Cooperation with Others</b> Cooperates with others to carry out assignments, willingness to take fair share, courteous toward others.		
<b>Problem Solving &amp; Decision Making</b> If a problem appears, the student is able to use knowledge about the job to make a sound decision. If the student is unable to identify a solution, he/she asks a Supervisor.		
<b>Customer Service Skills</b> If the student works at the welcome desk or circulation desk, they greet people with a smile. If elsewhere in the library and people need help, the student willingly helps to solve their problem.		
<b>Initiative</b> If the student sees a problem, or that a worker or patron needs help, does the student willingly offer help without having to be asked.		
<b>Work Related Attitude</b> The student keeps a positive attitude, a willingness to improve and achieve, has adaptability to change, and a willingness to accept responsibility for actions.		
<b>Attendance &amp; Reliability</b> The student adheres to the work schedule, does not exceed allotted break times, and timely contacts the supervisor when he/she will be late or absent.		



**Overall Evaluation Rating** Please provide the rating in the box on the left, and provide supporting comments as to the choice of overall evaluation rating. Do not be concerned about the length. Attach separate document if needed.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; height: 30px; margin: 5px;"></div>	<p><b>Supervisor Comments:</b></p>
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**Performance**

Level	Performance Level Definitions
5	Student employee performed job requirements with exceptional skill and knowledge. Student employee clearly and consistently exceeded expectations in most areas of the job.
4	Student employee demonstrated job requirements above expectations. Student's performance exceeded expectations in many areas of the job.
3	Student employee's performance consistently met expectations. Student's work was fully effective, reliable, and of good quality.
2	Student employee did not consistently perform, and some improvement is needed.
1	Student employee's performance was consistently below the requirements of this position. Immediate corrective action is necessary.
Z	The performance factor is not relevant to the student's job duties.

**SIGNATURES**

<b>Supervisor</b>	Date
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<b>Employee</b> - I certify that this evaluation has been discussed with me by my Supervisor.	Date	
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TO BE COMPLETED **ONLY** AT END OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD EVALUATION

- The student's conduct has met expectations during the probationary period.
- The student's conduct did NOT meet expectations during the probationary period. I recommend this probationary student be dismissed.

Supervisor Signature	Date
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Library: \_\_\_\_\_

Desk: \_\_\_\_\_

## Daily Task List

- ask supervisor about current projects
- shelve books
- fulfill course reserve requests
- shelf read during free time
- help customers first before returning to work
- file hold requests
- unpack and repack books

Approximately how many customers did you help today? \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe what you did during work hours today:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Library: \_\_\_\_\_

Desk: \_\_\_\_\_

## Daily Task List

- ask supervisor about current projects
- shelve books
- fulfill course reserve requests
- shelf read during free time
- help customers first before returning to work
- file hold requests
- unpack and repack books

Approximately how many customers did you help today? \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe what you did during work hours today:

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## Student Directory

- Presented as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and stored on the Google drive.
- Internal use only. Supervisors can access and edit the list of the students and their primary way of contact. Students can view list to contact other students when they need to switch shifts.
- Includes student's name (first and last), preferred phone number and email address.

Example Excel Spreadsheet below:

	A	B	C	D
1	STUDENT DIRECTORY		Library: McKeldin	
2	Student LAST name	Student FIRST name	Contact Phone #	Email
3	Murphy	Julia	(301) 555-5555	<a href="mailto:emailaddress@gmail.com">emailaddress@gmail.com</a>
4				
5				

## Student Employee Improvement Needed Form

Date of Incident:

Library:

Name of Student Employee:

Observed  Patron

Describe what happened:

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*For Supervisor Only*

Date of Meeting:

Supervisor Name:

Plan for improvement:

**Student Signature:**

**Student Name (Print):**

**Supervisor Signature:**

**Keep up the Good Work!**

**Student Employee:**

**Date:**

**Describe what happened:**

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**Your Name:**

**Keep up the Good Work!**

**Student Employee:**

**Date:**

**Describe what happened:**

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**Your Name:**