#### Trent University LogoOPSEU JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Library Services Assistant

**Job Number:** L-092 | VIP: 1712

**Band:** OPSEU-5

**Department:** Durham Campus Library & Learning Centre

**Supervisor Title:** Manager, Durham Campus Library & Learning Centre

**Last Reviewed:**  December 23, 2021

#### **Job Purpose:**

#### Under the direction of the Manager, Durham Campus Library & Learning Centre (DCLLC), the incumbent supports the effective and efficient operation of DCLLC services and responsibilities within DCLLC, including providing information and fulfillment services at the Library Service Desk, recording statistics, assisting with physical collections, and indirect supervision of student library employees.

#### Key Activities:

##### Library Service Desk:

* Responds to incoming questions in person, via telephone, and online/via email in a professional and timely manner and redirects requests and questions as appropriate.
* Provides general reference services to assist patrons in clarifying and interpreting their information needs and recommends appropriate materials and sources to meet patrons’ needs.
* Records statistics related to inquiries and patron numbers.
* Provides basic instruction to patrons on how to conduct a search and gain access to materials and sources using the library’s discovery system and online databases (library-subscribed databases).
* Provides effective front-line customer service, resolving or escalating patron concerns and troubleshooting issues with library technology such as the library’s discovery system, and online databases.
* Performs the complete range of circulation duties including loans, returns, holds, transits, and fines and fees processing.
* Assists with processing of physical items for course reserves.
* Communicates with other DCLLC staff and Bata Library staff in a proactive manner to share information that brings about the successful delivery of services.
* Registers exempt patrons and external borrowers within the Library Service Platform (LSP), and issues library cards as appropriate.
* Understands, communicates, and applies library policies and procedures.
* Assists Manager with updating library policies, procedures, and workflows as they pertain to DCLLC.
* As sole Trent Durham GTA campus staff member on site evenings and/or weekends, answers basic questions about the Durham GTA Campus and Trent University.
* Assists patrons with basic computer usage at DCLLC such as logging on and printing, and basic troubleshooting for printers and photocopiers. For issues that require more expertise, notifies IT or makes service calls as necessary.
* Performs opening and closing procedures at the DCLLC during scheduled hours including unlocking and locking DCLLC doors.
* In the event of an emergency, follow emergency protocols.
* Provides general library support as needed, including shelving, searching for, retrieving, and processing of library materials, and processing incoming and outgoing mail including resource sharing materials.

##### Human Resources:

* Following priorities outlined by the Manager, shares responsibility with other DCLLC staff for briefing, directing, and supervising student library employees, including developing student task list and workflows, and assigning extra duties as applicable.
* Shares responsibility with other DCLLC staff for ongoing training and assessing student library employees as directed by the Manager.
* Shares regular feedback on student library employee’s performance with the Manager.

##### Physical Collections & Processing:

* Assists with tasks related to maintenance of the physical collection, including shifting the collection and updating signage.
* Identifies damaged library items and performs basic repairs on items as needed; identifies library items needing more than basic repairs and sends items to Bata Library for assessment.
* Checks inventory reports and physical items status and performs associated searching and verification tasks as appropriate.

##### Other:

* Contributes to Library & Archives special projects as required.
* Sits on Library & Archives committees as needed and with the approval of the Manager.
* Performs other duties as assigned by the Manager.

#### Education Required:

* A Library & Information Technician Diploma (2 year) required.
* An undergraduate university degree (3 year) is preferred.

#### Experience/Qualifications Required:

* Minimum of two (2) years of related customer service or administrative experience required.
* One (1) year of library experience, with a preference for academic library experience is preferred.
* Proficient in working with an Integrated Library System (ILS) or Library Services Platform (LSP) and well-versed in providing reference information services.
* Excellent customer service and interpersonal skills, with demonstrated tact and diplomacy, and a strong commitment to the promotion of positive public relations amongst users and staff.
* Ability to work both independently and as part of a team, with awareness of when to take initiative and when to consult with others
* Demonstrated experience performing circulation services.
* Experience searching library catalogues and databases in Windows/Mac environments.
* Proficiency with Microsoft Office, and comfortable learning and using new technologies and applications.
* Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
* Accuracy and attention to details in a complex and fast-paced work environment
* Demonstrated analytical ability, initiative, and problem-solving skills.
* Good judgment and ability to make decisions independently.
* Demonstrated time management skills with ability to handle and prioritize a high volume of demands and work under pressure.
* Physical ability to lift books and boxes, maneuver loaded book trucks, and lift and carry up to 15 kilos.
* Able to commit to and be flexible in work schedule, including working daytime, evenings, and weekends.

#### Supervision:

* Indirectly supervises and directs the activities of student employees.

**Job Evaluation Factors:**

##### Analytical Reasoning

The position requires the ability to analyze a situation and a wide variety of established practices and defined policies in order to match the correct action to the patron’s specific needs. The position also needs to adapt to situations where established practices do not apply, especially during times when they are the only staff member in the library (evenings and weekends). Analysis is required to clarify and clearly understand patrons questions and requests; to assess how to best fill the request or whether to escalate the request; and to assess if the provided solution has met the patron’s needs or if additional actions are required.

Examples:

The Library Services Assistant is required to assist students with basic reference questions. This requires clarifying the research question the student is trying solve; assessing the student’s level of experience with library resources and the level of instruction they need; adapting to the students’ communication and learning needs; analyzing which library resources best address the research question; assisting the student in formulating search strategies; evaluating the efficacy of different sources and search strategies to address the research question; and assessing if the student needs more advance support from a librarian. Requests can be filled by following established professional and local practices, although in many circumstances a discovery and exploration-based approach is needed.

At times the Library Services Assistant is the only staff member in the library (evenings/weekends) and must be able to assist or direct all patron questions, whether basic or complex. This requires being able to quickly analyze and apply specific library and general university procedures and knowledge without support from others, including determining the correct course of action when library material is brought to the desk for checkout, determine the best course of action when a student worker calls in sick, directing patrons to other campus services, etc. As emergency protocols cannot cover all eventualities, the assistant must analyze the situation to determine which established emergency protocols should be applied while also adapting quickly to determine the best response to the specific incident and that best addresses the safety of those in the library.

##### Decision Making

Decision making for the position primarily relates to responding to patron requests, although additional decisions are made in areas such as indirect supervision of student library employees, maintenance of physical collections, application of library policies, and reacting to emergency situations. Decisions often follow established procedures but also may require adaption depending on the complexity of the request and whether the Library Service Assistant is working alone.

Examples:

When assisting a student with a research question, decisions include the type of communication and instruction style to use, selecting appropriate resources and search strategies, deciding what level of instruction the student requires, deciding when the student’s needs have been met, and determining when the user should be directed to someone else for further support.

When working as the only staff member in the library, adaptation is more frequent, as there is no supervisor to consult in making decisions and delaying a decision can negatively impact library patrons. Judgement is required to make decisions related to application or overriding of library policies, such as when a student claims they have paid a fine required to reinstate library privileges, but there is not record of payment found in the Library Service Platform (LSP). In a situation with a hostile patron, the Library Service Assistant must decide at what point attempts to assist the patron and defuse the situation are no longer working, when to ask the patron to leave for the safety of others, and when to call Campus Security or other emergency services.

##### Impact

Examples:

Failure to respond respectfully and effectively to patron requests or concerns may affect patron satisfaction and institutional reputation. Interactions between library staff and students will influence student satisfaction with library services and, more broadly, can impact student success and retention rates.

Failure to respond appropriately to emergency situations in the library may result in severe or imminent safety risks to students, staff, and faculty, as well as damage to library facilities and/or physical library collections.

Incorrect information provided for research questions impacts students’ ability to complete course work satisfactorily; incorrect information provided to instructors impacts their ability to teach courses. Mistakes and not completing tasks also have implications for colleagues who staff the desk, as uneven levels of service can increase workload for other staff. Fulfillment errors related to resource sharing can negatively affect other libraries.

Not following established protocols for physical collections can result in items not being retrievable when needed, or items being declared lost. Performing an override within the LSP to help a patron may result in the loss of the material, fines, or inability to supply the item to another patron.

##### Responsibility for the Work of Others

Indirect responsibility

* Student Library Ambassadors – part-time student employees
  + Following priorities outlined by the Manager, directs and supervises student library employees at the Library Service desk.
  + Ensures that tasks assigned to a student library employee are completed during shift.
  + Assists the Manager with ongoing training of student library employees when working at the Library Service desk.
  + Shares regular feedback on student library employee performance with the Manager.

##### Communication

Internal: Students, Staff, Faculty, Administrators, Facilities Management, Trent Card Office, IT, Print & Post, Security, Student Affairs, Trent Durham Student Association (TDSA).

External: Members of the public, other libraries, couriers, service providers.

Examples:

The Library Service Desk is the first point of contact for all library questions and issues. On evenings and weekends, the incumbent can be the only staff member on site, so they must be able to communicate with any individual who enters the library. Questions can range from simple and directional ones, to in-depth research queries. The incumbent is required to respond to people in person, by phone, and online, and is the first point of contact for messages sent to the general library email. Communication also includes explaining rules and regulations to library users, such as borrowing privileges and fine policies. Communications can be confidential in nature, such as discussing fines and loans with patrons.

Significant communication takes place between the Library Services Assistant and other library employees to transfer information and ensure efficient service. This includes discussions related to how to handle physical materials, discussing improvements to procedures and workflow, transferring or escalating patrons requests, and participation in functional teams.

As indirect supervisor of student library employees, communicates regularly with student employees to provide guidance and feedback, and to explain and assign tasks based on priorities provided by the Manager.

##### Motor/ Sensory Skills

Motor Skills: Job duties include daily use of keyboard for data entry and communication, and use of a mouse and barcode scanner. Fine motor skills and dexterity are also required for processing physical library collections such as minor repairs to damaged items or application of spine labels. Precision is required as errors in data entry can affect patron records and library item records, which can have a significant impact, such as patron loss of library privileges or inability to locate library materials. Gross motor skills, equilibrium, and coordination are required to retrieve or shelve library items, including reaching, bending, squatting, stepping up on stool, and for maneuvering a library cart.

Sensory Skills: Job duties requiring hearing to respond to queries at the Library Service Desk, and sight to read barcodes, book spines, etc.

##### Effort

Physical demands

* Lifting, moving, walking, carrying, pushing, climbing, balancing, kneeling to move physical collections throughout the library or from the exterior book bin.
* Sitting for long periods at the Library Service Desk, and long periods looking at a computer screen.

Mental demands

* Multiple competing demands: participates in a variety of library services, deals with patron requests through multiple channels (in person, online, and via telephone), supports multiple Library & Archives units.
* Extended periods of visual attention and sustained concentration: compiling data, inputting information into library systems while verifying accuracy, reading policies and procedures.
* Dealing with frequent interruptions while working at the Library Service Desk.
* Ability to self-regulate under stressful and demanding circumstances.
* Ability to maintain a calm and professional attitude in emergency situations.

##### Working Conditions

Psychological Conditions:

* Complaints from patrons regarding access to library collections, fines and fees, policies, availability of library space, noise, etc.
* Multiple competing demands: participates in a variety of library services, deals with patron requests through multiple channels (in person, online, and via telephone), supports multiple Library & Archives units.
* Nature of the work results in unavoidable busy period due to high volumes of questions during certain times of the day.
* Lack of privacy when working at the Library Service Desk.
* Frequent interruptions at the desk from library patrons, couriers, other Trent staff, etc.
* Confidentiality requirements related to fine appeals, items on loan, disclosures by student employees, etc.
* Stress due to possible emergency situations and dealing with them alone.
* Possibility of hostile situations involving stressed patrons or members of the public.
* Must be able to work evenings and weekends when required.

Physical Conditions:

* Dust from bookshelves.
* Repetitive tasks such as checking in and out of physical materials.
* Being able to lift up to 15 kilos.