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Employability project at City University

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The Library Employability Group at City University London began work in August 2014. Our aim was to explore how Library Services can assist students in developing skills to enable them to be employable in the future and how the Library can add value to the work of other departments such as Careers, Student Development & Outreach.

Our objectives included

- to investigate some best practice in other universities
- to build a current careers print collection
- to produce an online Library Employability guide
- to liaise and collaborate with other departments such as Careers.

We researched universities such as Edinburgh and Hertfordshire that have graduate attributes and have aligned their information literacy programmes with these. We also looked at experience-based design, which has been used in the NHS to improve services, based on the ideas, experiences and narratives of service users.

In order to gain a better insight into attitudes around employability, we conducted a survey asking students and staff (undergraduates, postgraduates, researchers, academics and library staff) about their past experiences, previous resources they had used and how they felt Library Services could assist them in this area. We subsequently conducted a small number of in-depth interviews with students from each level of academic study in order to expand on their survey responses.

In February 2015 we launched our Employability guide (<http://libguides.city.ac.uk/employability>) produced using LibGuides software. This highlights resources for employability such as social media, finding company information and using study skills resources. It is partially 'crowdsourced' from our students and contains some resources suggested by them. We engaged with students and staff from different Schools in the university such as Business, Library & Information Science, Social Sciences. The area where more content was requested was 'Finding company information', so we developed this further.

To accompany the guide we offered a range of workshops covering current awareness, researching company information and building a social media profile to assist with employability. We believe having strong information literacy, digital literacy and research skills assists students in obtaining and retaining a job. The workshops were offered to both students and careers staff and administrated using our online booking system LibCal (<http://libcal.city.ac.uk>).

In addition to this we received some investment from our Library Leadership Team to develop a current careers collection on interview skills, job hunting and communication skills, etc. To make the items easily retrievable we have tagged these titles on our Library Management System; we are also building up a careers 'reading list' using our reading list software, Reading Lists Online (<http://readinglists.city.ac.uk/index.html>).

We had the great opportunity to present a paper about our work at Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) in April 2015. We were pleased to have questions and feedback on our project from colleagues from other universities. Our presentation and conference reports can be found on the LILAC 2015 Archive webpage.

A real benefit for us has been forging closer relationships with our Careers, Student Development & Outreach Department and we can signpost and

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recommend each others' services more effectively. We have really enjoyed the opportunity to work on this project and speak to students about their experiences to inform our services and resource provision.

LILAC (2015) LILAC 2015. Available at:
<http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/past-conferences/lilac-2015>
[accessed: 09 June 2015]

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