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## User Experience At Grand Valley State University: Training Students Who Take the Lead in Staffing the Library's Single Service Point

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Collaborators 3

# USER EXPERIENCE AT GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY: Training Students Who Take the Lead in Staffing the Library's Single Service Point

*Kristin Meyer, Maya Hobscheid, Kristin  
Kerbavaz, and Kiersten Quilliams*

## OVERVIEW

First, a story...

Several summers ago, our user experience (UX) librarian placed a sign on the outside of her office door highlighting a common definition of UX: User experience characterizes how a person feels about using a product, system, or service.<sup>1</sup> The sign ended with the following blurb: “Let’s make people feel...” She put out sticky notes and markers and encouraged staff and UX student assistants to share their thoughts on how we want people

to feel when they visit the library. After a few weeks, the following sticky notes covered the space:

- Comfortable
- Supported
- Valued
- Heard
- Connected
- Impressed
- Delighted
- Enthusiastic
- Awesome
- Happy
- Relieved
- Inspired
- Compelled
- Appreciated
- Energized
- Gnarly
- Understood
- Well-accommodated
- Special
- Welcomed like it's their home
- Pleasantly surprised
- Kewl ("Cool," according to one of our especially hip students)

We used these sticky notes during our UX student orientation that year. While discussing the purpose and importance of UX, the UX librarian held up the sign and slowly read each sticky note. She finished by saying, "And that's why we're all here. We want every student who comes into the library to feel like this. You have the opportunity to truly make an impact here. You have the chance to shape how your fellow classmates experience the library." At that moment, every student in the room was captivated. There was an almost palpable energy. After a few seconds of letting the power of their role sink in, she said, "So, you know—no pressure or anything." Everyone laughed and, considering it was 8:15 on a Friday morning, we were off to a great start.

Our UX team values storytelling. In *Made to Stick*, Chip and Dan Heath make the case that using a compelling narrative is one of the most effective ways to ensure that an idea survives rather than dies.<sup>2</sup> Telling intentional stories can be an effective training technique; stories capture students' attention and increase the likelihood that certain information will "stick" with them. When we develop training activities for our UX students, we try to incorporate the power of story.

As demonstrated by the responses our UX team left on the sticky notes, we also value inclusion. We want library users to not only feel supported, but also comfortable, understood, and welcomed "like it's their home." At a historically majority white institution, we also know that inclusion has to be intentional, so we have worked to increasingly incorporate training activities that support inclusion and accessibility. This effort is ongoing and aligned with a library-wide goal to "identify and eliminate barriers to ensure that all members of the library community are able to fully participate in library spaces and services."<sup>3</sup> Incorporating inclusion into our storytelling allows for the sharing of more diverse perspectives and further encourages critical thinking.

## ***User Experience Student Assistants***

Grand Valley State University Libraries has a team of approximately twenty-five user experience (UX) student assistants who take the lead in staffing the single service desk at the Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and Information Commons in Allendale, MI. The primary responsibilities of these students include the following:

- greeting and welcoming library users;
- answering a variety of directional, circulation, abbreviated reference, and technology questions;
- providing library tours;
- roaming the library to assist users at the point of need, support library operations, and collect user-related data;
- assisting with a variety of user experience-related projects, primarily involving the student experience of the physical library space; and
- providing feedback on various library policies, services, programs, initiatives, and ideas.

This group of student colleagues was formed in 2012 in preparation for the move into the Mary Idema Pew Library in 2013, and this service model was created intentionally to capture the benefits of peer learning and to support one of the guiding principles of the new building—student empowerment.<sup>4</sup> This is high-level student work that requires a deliberate, comprehensive, and collaborative training plan that extends throughout a student's employment.<sup>5</sup>

Activities that are engaging, diverse, and sometimes competitive are key when developing a training program that is motivating for student colleagues to want to grow in their jobs.

*Heather Allen, Library Specialist & UX Student Supervisor  
Grand Valley State University*

## ***Collaboration***

The single service desk at the Mary Idema Pew Library was designed for student workers to take the lead but includes an area in the background—coined “The Perch”—for a professional support staff member to oversee desk activity, answer phone calls, respond to chat and text messaging, and troubleshoot or answer questions. Staff members also

use this time to assist with student training initiatives. Involving multiple support staff in training is one of many ways that the UX student training plan includes collaboration.

Although liaison librarians do not typically work shifts at the service desk, they work collaboratively with the UX team in several ways. In addition to providing instructional sessions and supporting faculty in their areas of responsibility, liaison librarians also provide one-on-one consultations with students by appointment and on a drop-in basis. While UX students can explain how to get started searching and answer basic reference questions, they frequently refer users who have more complex questions. Liaisons also assist with training by conducting reference-related workshops and participating in the reference training portion of our student orientation.

As described in the previous chapter, our library also employs student research consultants. Our UX students are a separate group of students that serve as an entry point to the more comprehensive research services provided by our research consultants and liaison librarians. Collaboration between the services is critical for this model to be successful.

The UX team also engages in project-based collaboration with other library faculty and staff. Two specific collaborative projects highlighted in this chapter include the development of reference learning guides as well as modules on inclusive customer service.

Training can provide opportunities for students to connect and truly become a team. Some of these connections can last a lifetime.

*Deb Maddox, Circulation Coordinator  
Grand Valley State University*

## ***UX Student Employment at-a-Glance***

The UX student employment program starts with strategic hiring practices. The training plan includes multiple components, including:<sup>6</sup>

- an orientation that happens at the beginning of the fall semester;
- on-the-ground training that occurs within the first few weeks of the semester;
- workshops that are offered throughout the semester and often facilitated by liaison librarians, other library faculty or staff, or returning students; and
- a variety of “anytime” training activities, including reference learning guides, customer service modules, and other forms of asynchronous learning that students complete when it is slow at the service desk.

# ADMINISTRATION

The UX team is a functional team within our operations and user services department. The UX team collaborates across multiple library locations to provide excellent customer service; evaluate services provided in our service desk environments; develop training for service desk employees; implement UX techniques to understand user needs; communicate with users through social media, digital displays, and signage; and develop user engagement activities.

The UX students at the Mary Idema Pew Library report directly to our user experience student supervisor. This staff member oversees student hiring, scheduling, and evaluations. Our UX librarian is a faculty member who is a manager in the operations and user services department and is responsible for leading the UX team and guiding the UX student employment program at a high level. The UX librarian and UX student supervisor work together with other student supervisors in the department to create hiring and training plans.

Access and delivery (A&D) student assistants are a separate group of student colleagues within the operations and user services department at the Mary Idema Pew Library. They perform many traditional access services tasks, including checking in materials, pulling holds, and shelving. Dividing this work was an intentional effort to support our service philosophy:<sup>7</sup> We do not want our students who work at the service desk to be deeply engaged in tasks that would reduce their approachability.

## ***Communication***

UX students work a variety of shifts between 7:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m. and are responsible for keeping up with ever-changing information; communication can be a challenge. In 2014, we created a UX student Blackboard organization that houses procedural information and training documents and includes a discussion board for updates. The discussion board has been a useful tool because students can respond and ask questions about our posts and can utilize the search function to locate older posts. At the end of each posted update, we ask a question to ensure all UX students have read the message. Sometimes the question relates to the post, but more often the question is fun and encourages team building. For example, “If you could have one super power, what would it be?” This has been a great way to help us get to know the personalities of our students. It also encourages students to interact with their student colleagues and builds a sense of community.

## ***Budgets***

Our total student budget has increased as a result of splitting UX and A&D students. However, we review scheduling needs each year in an effort to be as fiscally responsible as possible.

## **Student Wages**

Our UX students start at the statewide minimum wage and follow our campus-wide tier for wage increases, consistent with most student jobs on campus. We have not found that we need to advertise a higher wage to encourage students to apply; the library is an appealing place to work on campus, and the UX position is highly visible in the library. While we do not focus exclusively on hiring work-study students and, in fact, only a small portion of our existing UX students have work-study awards, work-study students are preferred when all other qualifications between students are equal.

# HIRING

The UX student colleague program has a strategic hiring plan that includes elements of peer hiring.<sup>8</sup> Current students review applications and participate in the interview process. Involving current students provides us with valuable feedback and also gives students the opportunity to experience the hiring process from the perspective of an employer. Students have indicated that these opportunities were helpful when it was time for them to apply for jobs in their chosen fields.

The majority of UX students are hired in preparation for the fall semester. We have adjusted our hiring timeline so that hiring occurs in May through July, during Grand Valley's spring semester. Although significantly fewer students are on campus during the spring semester, this timing creates enough space for us to implement peer hiring elements, gives students an opportunity to find out whether or not they have received a work-study award, and allows first-year students to apply.

## ***Job Description***

We have intentionally crafted the UX student job description to explain the scope of the position and to set high expectations for students (see Appendix A). We want students to understand that they will have the opportunity to learn professional skills, they will be treated professionally, and we expect that they will, in turn, take pride in performing this work in a professional manner. A professional job description and a somewhat elevated application process help signify this. The job description contains several sections, including the following:

- position summary;
- job duties;
- required qualifications;
- preferred qualifications;
- employment outcomes; and
- standard hours for this position.



Employment outcomes were added to help reinforce our commitment to making student employment a high-impact learning experience. While making money may be students' primary motivation, we also want them to know that they will be gaining much more throughout their employment.

Working as a UX student has arguably been the best thing to happen to me since coming to Grand Valley. Being part of the front-line at the library has allowed me to interact with a variety of different people and has given me social and communication skills I wouldn't have gotten otherwise. I've also learned about the many different resources the library has to offer which has helped me tremendously in school.

*UX Student, Grand Valley State University*

## ***Application***

The UX student application includes standard application content as well as some short-answer questions and scenarios that help us identify students who have the potential for success in this position (see Appendix B). Specifically, we look for students who are personable and will be able to provide friendly, efficient customer service. We look for students who are enthusiastic about our libraries and are interested in helping others. Additionally, we implement inclusive hiring practices aimed at hiring students who come from diverse backgrounds and are committed to helping all students, regardless of their backgrounds and identities. Existing UX students help review applications by using a rubric; the purpose of the rubric is to help reduce unconscious bias.

## ***Interviews***

The UX student supervisor and at least one current UX student conduct interviews. Selected applicants are asked questions aimed at discovering whether or not they have the specific skills and qualities that we are looking for in this position. At the end of the interview, the candidate is asked to give the interviewers a tour of the office suite. While specific tour content is not evaluated, the interviewers look for students who display the ability to “think on their feet,” are friendly, poised, and have the ability to make a personal connection with others. Students are typically surprised by this activity and end up conducting the tours in a variety of styles. Interviewees have made up stories about the objects decorating the space, pretended that they were in a shopping mall, and recited fake



facts about the library. Some of them do a marvelous job, and, anecdotally, this activity seems to be predictive of future job success.

## TRAINING

The UX student training plan includes multiple components, and training happens all throughout a student's employment with us.<sup>9</sup> UX students need to have an understanding of the big picture—what user experience is, what great customer service looks like, what the library values, and where they fit into the organization. To provide excellent customer service, they also need to understand numerous policies, procedures, searching strategies, building information, and how other library services work. We need new students to understand the basics, and we need students who have worked multiple semesters to continue to expand their knowledge and understanding so that they can, in turn, help mentor new students. The training plan involves elements that help meet these varying needs.

Taking time to orient students to our organization, environment, and how their role fits into the bigger picture enhances their motivation and ability to deliver effective library services. This approach has been very beneficial.

*Brian Merry, Head of Operations and User Services  
Grand Valley State University*

### **Orientation**

The foundation of the UX training plan includes a day-long orientation (or, as we implemented in 2019, two half-days) held prior to the start of the fall semester. The orientation is mandatory for both new and returning students and students are paid for their time. Objectives include giving students a broad overview of what user experience is, what good customer service looks like, what their work will entail, what the library values, and where they fit into the organization. Policies, procedures, and task-specific training are purposely not part of orientation. During orientation, we engage in intentional storytelling, facilitate group discussions, use a variety of engaging activities, encourage both new and returning students to act out various customer service and reference scenarios, and involve numerous colleagues to promote ongoing connection and collaboration between our UX students and others in the library.

One example of purposeful storytelling that we use during orientation is the “Measuring Cup Story,” which one of the authors first heard from Paul-Jervis Heath at the *UX in Libraries* conference.<sup>10</sup> She tells it like this:

There were these product engineers who wanted to design a better measuring cup. They could have just asked consumers for their suggestions and feedback, but instead, they set up a test kitchen. They watched as people used measuring cups as they naturally went about baking something. It didn't take long for them to notice a pattern—almost everyone would pour something into their measuring cup and then either lift it to eye-level or they would bend down so that their eyes were level with the counter. Over and over again, they saw “pour, lift, pour, bend.” The people were doing this, of course, to make sure that their ingredients were measured precisely. Well, those product engineers ended up designing an angled measuring cup that can be read from any height or direction. No bending needed! Now, if those product engineers would have just asked their test subjects for their feedback and suggestions, it's unlikely that they would have been able to point out that bending and lifting was a wasted motion. They probably wouldn't have been able to imagine a measuring cup that could be different. And that's why observation is so important. That's why we ask students for their feedback, but we also collect data and implement user experience techniques to find out what students actually do in the library. These things can often help us identify pain points for our users that we wouldn't be able to determine any other way.

This story helps illustrate the “why” behind user experience and is told intentionally to help students understand and buy-in to work that can be tedious.

Various library colleagues and building partners attend and participate in specific elements of orientation. For example, liaison librarians and our instructional design librarian participate in the reference training portion.

The reference training portion has included modified content each year. One year we divided students into groups with each group having a mix of new students and returning students. Each group was assigned a reference-related question that had been asked at the service desk. Questions varied in difficulty and were chosen to highlight multiple library resources. The groups developed skits in which new students had to play the part of a UX student, and one or more of the returning students played the part of the user. To create the skit, returning students had to act as a mentor to new students by showing them how to answer the question. The two liaison librarians were available to consult with the groups and were willing to play a part in the skit if the groups wanted. The groups each presented their skits to the full group. This gave new students the opportunity to practice answering reference questions and provided exposure to a variety of resources. After each skit, we facilitated a group discussion that included feedback on what the student did well and what they could have done differently or more efficiently in the future. In 2019 we

took a different approach. Students first watched a short video on basic search strategies. The students then divided into groups and played a few rounds of Search & Destroy,<sup>11</sup> a multi-player card game in which players build searches to compete for the highest number of database results.

Overall our orientations have been well-received, and we continue to use student feedback to make them better each year. Evaluations indicate that students especially value the interactive components and having the opportunity to meet with others in the organization. They also really like the free lunch and coffee!

## ***On-the-Ground Training***

Although orientation does not focus on task-specific processes, we recognize that new UX students need to have thorough knowledge of a variety of procedures and policies to be able to provide excellent customer service. To gain this knowledge, new UX students work with returning students and staff to complete a job-specific checklist over the first several weeks of their employment. Including returning students in this process adds an element of peer-learning and gives returning students mentoring experience, while at the same time deepening their own understanding of library procedures and policy. Returning students also help us update and improve the checklist each year.

Another successful component of on-the-ground training has been implementing weekly “training quick checks.” Each week, we select a topic for our staff at the Perch to go over with UX students. Topics are typically selected if staff have noticed that we have been getting a specific question repeatedly asked at the desk, if we anticipate a certain question will be asked because of the time of year, or if we see from our chat transcripts or service desk transactional data that students struggle answering a particular question. The topic usually includes questions for staff to ask students as well as a training script that describes how the questions should be answered. We have received positive feedback about this initiative from both staff—who indicate that this is also often a useful refresher for them—as well as students.

## ***Workshops***

Our UX student training plan also includes skill development workshops. We typically offer four to six of these workshops per semester, and students are required to attend at least two of them. These workshops are often conducted by liaison librarians, although other library faculty and staff or other campus partners, such as the Division of Inclusion and Equity, also facilitate some workshops. Some of our returning students have also developed and facilitated workshops. Content has included topics such as the following:

- using primary sources;
- researching government documents;

- working with international students;
- copyright and scholarly communication;
- accessible customer service practices; and
- emergency training.

Library research consultants, other library student employees, and other library faculty and staff are also invited to attend, encouraging interaction between library employees at all levels. Some workshops are repeated from semester to semester while some content is designed fresh. This ensures that UX students who have worked several semesters continue to learn and expand their knowledge throughout their employment.

## ***Anytime Activities***

Although the service desk is very busy during peak library hours, students have occasional pockets of downtime. We want our UX students to be as approachable as possible, so they do not work on library tasks (such as checking in carts of books) or homework. However, we recognize that students need something productive to work on during slow times and have designed a variety of asynchronous training activities that are easy to complete at the service desk.

Among these activities are a series of learning guides, self-paced training modules designed to teach UX students key concepts related to their work at the service desk. We used two pedagogical frameworks to design the guides: Universal Design for Learning and backward design. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for developing flexible learning environments and materials to accommodate diverse learners.<sup>12</sup> UDL supplies three overarching guidelines to support the implementation of the UDL framework: multiple means of engagement, the why of learning; multiple means of representation, the what of learning; and multiple means of action and expression, the how of learning.<sup>13</sup> The guides follow these guidelines by including different types of check-ins and reflective components, embedding a variety of media such as videos and library guides, and by providing transparent instructions. The backward design model is a method of designing curriculum in which the learning goals are chosen before the assessment and instructional activities.<sup>14</sup> By beginning with the learning objectives when designing the guides, we could structure the guides to best support and measure student learning.

We developed a series of three reference learning guides to provide UX students with an understanding of the scope of reference questions they could expect to encounter at the service desk, prepare them to address these types of questions, and to know when and how to make referrals for more complex reference questions. We divided these guides into three sections: two guides on reference basics, and one on advanced reference topics. Each guide begins with a short introduction and learning objectives. The first reference basics guide covers navigating our discovery layer using basic limiters; identifying the differences between articles, journals, and databases; and performing a journal title search (see

Appendix C). The second reference basics guide examines recognizing a peer reviewed article, performing a basic database search, and describing the uses of a library subject guide. The advanced reference guide covers distinguishing between primary and secondary sources, locating empirical studies in the databases, using different citation styles, and searching for known items in the catalog.

Each guide is divided into sections that correspond to the learning objectives and contain a variety of types of content and interactive components. Chunking the content into manageable pieces allows students to tackle bits and pieces as the ebb and flow of the service desk allows. The guides include videos created both in-house at Grand Valley and at other institutions, library guides created by liaison librarians and Knowledge Market consultants, and quick tips for answering relevant reference questions. The guides also provide reference scenarios, interactive modules, and pre- and post-reflective questions. The reflective pieces encourage UX students to connect the content to their own experiences as students and to their role in supporting students at the service desk.

My favorite part about being a UX student is gaining connections to the awesome people here! I've also been able to improve my customer service skills, especially with talking to professionals interested in our library. As a non-profit major and hospitality minor, the latter-mentioned skill will be most useful in my career.

*UX Student, Grand Valley State University*

We have also recently developed three new learning guides that focus on customer service (see Appendix D). The guides complement and build upon customer service training provided during orientation and follow the same structure developed for the reference learning guides, including internal and external content as well as interactive elements and opportunities for reflection. The first customer service learning guide asks students to reflect on the idea of customer experience. Students read library policies around customer service, compare our guidelines to materials produced by other libraries, and brainstorm how to apply active listening skills in the service desk environment. Themes throughout the module include listening closely to user needs and making user experience as effortless as possible.

The second and third guides in this series focus on inclusive and accessible customer service practices, and expand on the content covered during orientation and in some of our in-person workshops. These topics align with our library's stated values: "We are committed to removing barriers to full access and participation for our whole community."<sup>15</sup>

Building off the first customer service learning guide, the inclusive customer service learning guide aims to help students think critically about prejudice, implicit bias, stereotype threat, and ways that these concepts affect customer service. Reflection questions, such as “How might stereotype threat impact a user’s experience of asking for help at the desk?” encourage UX students to think about and understand the lived experiences of others. Specific approaches, such as using gender inclusive language, are then discussed as ways to provide a more inclusive customer service experience.

The third learning guide in this series, accessible customer service, further expands on these concepts and is rooted in asking ourselves how we can ensure our tools, services, and spaces are available to and usable by as many people as possible. Core to this idea is to avoid making assumptions, to empower our users, and to be aware of the language and terminology we use at our service desk. Our UX students read through an accessible customer service practices<sup>16</sup> document we had previously created, reflect on their own experiences of feeling supported or not supported, and reflect on how people-first language emphasizes the individual and aims to provide a great experience.

These three customer service learning guides aim to empower our student employees to improve user experience. They are encouraged to take this information and think about additional ways we can assist users, and bring forward barriers they may encounter or ideas for further support we could provide. This learning is also potentially translatable to their academics and to their future professions.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment of our UX student employee program includes individual employee assessment, holistic service assessment, and the assessment of specific components of the training plan.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Individual Employee Assessment***

Each of our UX student employees has a formal evaluation once per academic year. The UX Student Supervisor solicits feedback from multiple staff and incorporates that feedback into each evaluation. While evaluating students is a form of performance management, the main purpose of the evaluation process is to give students the experience of having a formal evaluation, which can be useful for overall professional growth.

### ***Holistic Service Assessment***

We also assess services by recording questions asked at the service desk and their corresponding answers. The question data that we collect through LibInsight gives us a broad understanding of what types of questions are being asked, interaction duration, referrals,

and user comments and feedback. Reviewing the answers also helps us identify training successes and opportunities. If there is a question that students have trouble answering, we often include it in a weekly training quick check.

Similarly, chat, text, and email to our generic library account are also typically answered at the Perch. While staff answer the majority of these questions, UX students also occasionally answer them. Reviewing the transcripts and tracking service metrics, such as user ratings for our chat responses, provides opportunities to highlight excellent responses and to identify opportunities for improvement.

## ***Assessment of Training Plan Components***

We try to capture student feedback anytime we consider adding new training components and throughout the development process. For example, we ask students to fill out surveys at the end of each orientation. We then use that feedback to improve subsequent orientations. Additionally, we send graduating students an exit survey. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate their employment experience as a whole, but we also specifically ask for their feedback on how we can improve student training.

We have also recently implemented pre- and post-testing to measure student learning over time. UX students complete a pre-test at the beginning of their employment before any of our training. The plan is that they will complete the same test after their first year of employment and again before they graduate. By using the same pre-test and post-test, we can measure how much and what the student learned.

We initially created this pre-test assessment in conjunction with the reference learning guides and later incorporated it in the development of the customer service learning guides (see Appendix E). The decision to expand this part of the assessment program grew out of an increasing campus interest in assessing student learning outcomes, as well as campus initiatives supporting experiential learning through student employment.<sup>18</sup> In 2019, the library's assessment plan was updated to include new emphasis on assessing the knowledge and skills that student employees learn during their employment at the library. The customer service learning guides were developed alongside the assessment instrument, and the guides as well as their assessments will be made available to student supervisors in other departments so we can begin to gather data about the impact of student employment throughout the library.

# REFLECTION

## ***Training is Never Done***

Our UX student program has existed for eight years. In those years, our training plan has evolved significantly. We have adapted our training to align with the values of the library



and the mission of the university, and we have improved training methods through collaboration, assessment, and ongoing student feedback. Just as students continue to learn throughout their employment with us, we continue to enhance training efforts.

Remember those powerful stories we love to tell our UX students? We will always be on the lookout for more stories because training, learning, and empathy-building is never finished.

## ***Collaboration is Key***

Including multiple perspectives, strengths, and areas of expertise improves the content of our training and can help student employees feel supported by multiple staff and departments. Creating opportunities for separate student employee groups to learn and interact with each other and with other library professionals will encourage a shared understanding of library services.

## ***The Future of UX Student Training***

As we look ahead, continuing to embed inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility into our student training plan is our most important goal. When we think about the ways that we can impact student learning outside the classroom, we have the opportunity to strengthen professional skills but also to enhance critical thinking skills and empower students to be change-makers in their own communities. Through our training and storytelling, we have the opportunity to encourage our student employees to tell their own stories, to think about and consider others, and to go out and develop alternatives, inspire hope, and take action in their perspective fields.

# APPENDIX A

## USER EXPERIENCE (UX) STUDENT ASSISTANT POSITION DESCRIPTION

### ***Position Summary:***

Join a team designed to create a better experience for library patrons in the new Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and Information Commons! Become a User Experience Student Assistant and help staff the fast-paced library Service Desk. Excellent customer service skills, enthusiasm for the library, and the ability to work collaboratively with other students and staff are required. Primary responsibilities include assisting patrons with reference and circulation needs, providing building information and tours, and assisting with emergency and safety procedures. A variety of shifts are available; all applicants are expected to be able to work flexible hours, including some evenings, weekends, and extra hours during Exam Cram and for training purposes.

### ***Job Duties:***

- Assist patrons at the library Service Desk and throughout the building with abbreviated reference assistance, circulation tasks, and general building information.
- Roam the library to collect data, answer questions, and help with facilities and security-related issues.
- Provide tours of the library.
- Assist with opening and closing the library.
- Assist with building emergency and safety procedures.
- Promote library initiatives.
- Conduct patron interviews and other user experience research as needed.
- Other duties as assigned.

### ***Required Qualifications:***

- Excellent customer service and interpersonal skills
- The ability to prioritize multiple demands in a fast-paced work environment
- Enthusiasm for University Libraries and commitment to becoming an exemplary ambassador of the libraries
- The ability to work collaboratively with other staff and students

### ***Preferred Qualifications:***

- One year of customer service experience
- Work-study preferred

## ***Employment Outcomes:***

*What you can expect to learn in this position*

- Customer service skills
- Experience in promoting/marketing an organization
- Knowledge of user experience research techniques
- Basic emergency response training
- Communication skills: ability to professionally communicate with persons verbally, written, and online
- Teamwork: ability to positively work and engage in a team structure
- Problem-solving and analyzing: ability to make decisions and solve problems using creativity and reasoning
- Flexibility and adaptability: ability to manage and adapt to changing work conditions and assignments
- Administrative skills: ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work
- Cultural sensitivity and awareness: ability to demonstrate respect and awareness to other people and cultures
- Technology and computer literacy: ability to use current technology and computer software

## ***Standard Hours for this Position:***

Shifts are available from 6:30 a.m.–2:30 a.m.; you may be required to work any combination of shifts and must have transportation during these hours. Typically, UX students work between eight and fifteen hours per week during the fall and winter semesters.

# APPENDIX B

## STUDENT WORKER APPLICATION

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

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Year in School: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Study?  Yes  No

Why do you want to work for the University Libraries?

Please explain what you think excellent customer service includes.

Please explain how you would handle the following scenario: *A prospective student and her family visit the library and stop at the Service Desk. They mention that the student is interested in coming to Grand Valley. How would you respond?*

Please describe any experiences you have had interacting with people in a workplace, volunteering, or in a club or extracurricular activity.

References: Please list two (faculty or previous employers) and include one letter of reference with your application materials.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Employment: Please include employer, supervisor, address, position, responsibility, length of employment, and reason for leaving. Use additional pages if necessary.

UX students work shifts between the hours of 6:30 a.m.–2:30 a.m. You will be required to be available to work early morning, late night, and weekends. You will need to have transportation for all possible hours. Are you able to make this commitment?

Yes  No

You will be required to attend a mandatory all-day orientation each year in August. Are you able to make this commitment?  Yes  No

You will be required to work at least one overnight shift when the library holds extended hours for Exam Cram. Are you able to make this commitment?  Yes  No

**Please return your completed applications to the Mary Idema Pew Library Service Desk by \_\_\_\_\_.**

# APPENDIX C

## EXCERPT FROM "REFERENCE LEARNING GUIDE: THE BASICS PT. 1"

### Reference

When assisting students at the service desk, you will often answer basic reference questions. In libraries, reference is a category of questions that requires identifying and finding the needed information for research and/or an assignment. Student employees at the service desk can assist students with basic reference questions by using the preexisting tools available through the University Libraries website and by referring more complex questions to liaison librarians or research consultants.

The key objectives of this module:

As a result of this training, student employees will:

1. Navigate Summon using basic limiters
2. Identify the differences between articles, journals, and databases
3. Perform a journal title search

This Learner's Guide will guide you through resources, activities, and reflections related to each objective. The learning is self-paced and you are encouraged to go at your own speed, allowing time to apply the learning through various activities, then returning to the guide to reflect on what you learned through application.

### Pre-Learning Reflection

*Think about a time you needed to find information and/or do research for a school assignment, where did you begin?*

#### Section 1: Summon and Basic Limiters

When answering reference questions, one of the best tools at your disposal is the Library Search, Summon.

This section includes the following tips:

- **Tip 1:** Find information using the Library Search, Summon.

#### Tip 1: Finding Information with Summon

Summon, often referred to as the Library Search or Find It bar, is a discovery tool that searches everything in the library's collection including articles, books, ebooks, films, newspapers, magazines, and more. Students can search Summon from the search bar on the Library homepage.

**Note:** Though the official name of this tool is Summon, when showing it to students, we always call it the “Library Search” or “Find It!” box.

## Learn

### Watch the **Library Search: Refine Your Search**

In this short video, a UX student employee performs a search in Summon and uses the basic limiters to narrow the results.

**Scenario:** A student comes to the desk looking for help on a research paper. Their topic is how stress impacts the mental health of college students.

1. Open a browser, go to the Libraries homepage, and search for “stress, mental health, and college students.”
  - a. How many results did you get?
  - b. What is the first result?
2. Select either “full text online” or “scholarly & peer review”.
  - a. How many results do you have now?
  - b. How did it change the results?
3. Select and apply a content type.
  - a. Which one did you choose?
  - b. How many results do you have now?
  - c. How did it change the results?
4. Select and apply a discipline.
  - a. Which one did you choose?
  - b. How many results do you have now?
  - c. How did it change the results?

## Reflection

*How will you use Summon to support students at the service desk? What are the benefits of using Summon? What are the limitations?*



# APPENDIX D

## SELECTIONS FROM CUSTOMER SERVICE LEARNING GUIDES

The three customer service learning guides include:

- Written explanations of content
- Links to preexisting internal documents and external content
- Questions for learner engagement

For the purposes of this Appendix, we have selected portions of the guides that are representative of the guides' style and approach. We have also included the learning objectives of each module.

### ***Customer Service Learning Guide: Part 1*** **Customer Service**

The key objectives of this module:

As a result of this training, student employees will:

1. Identify University Libraries' Steps to Giving Great Service
2. Give examples of strategies that they can use to improve interactions with customers
3. Use the Apology Framework when necessary

This Learner's Guide will guide you through resources, activities, and reflections related to each objective. The learning is self-paced and you are encouraged to go at your own speed, allowing time to apply the learning through various activities, then returning to the guide to reflect on what you learned through application.

#### **Pre-Learning Reflection:**

*Think about a time when you received really excellent customer service. How did you feel? What did that person do to make that experience so good?*

### ***The Steps to Giving Great Service***

#### **Read**

University Libraries' Steps to Giving Great Service [we provide a link]

#### **Apply**

*Think about the excellent customer service experience you reflected on earlier in this learning guide. How did that person's actions fit the University Libraries Steps to Giving Great Service?*

## ***Customer Service Learning Guide: Part 2***

### **Inclusive Customer Service**

The key objectives of this module:

As a result of this training, student employees will:

1. Identify the ways in which prejudice can lead to implicit bias
2. Recognize the ways in which implicit biases and stereotype threat can impact customer service interactions
3. Utilize gender-neutral language

### **Pre-Learning Reflection:**

*What does it mean to be included? How does the idea of inclusion relate to the University Libraries Steps to Giving Great Service?*

**Take a short implicit bias test [we provide a link]**

### **Apply**

*Are you surprised by the results of the test? Why or why not?*

*How might implicit biases affect customer service? How can using the University Libraries Steps to Giving Great Service help minimize the impact of implicit biases?*

## ***Customer Service Learning Guide: Part 3***

### **Accessible Customer Service**

The key objectives of this module:

As a result of this training, student employees will:

1. Expand upon the University Libraries Steps to Giving Great Service to understand and utilize information about select disabilities to provide accessible customer service
2. Utilize person-first language
3. Empathize with the difficulties experienced by students with disabilities

This Learner's Guide will guide you through resources, activities, and reflections related to each objective. The learning is self-paced and you are encouraged to go at your own speed, allowing time to apply the learning through various activities, then returning to the guide to reflect on what you learned through application.

## Pre-Learning Reflection:

*Think about a time when you had to use a system, tool, or process that wasn't designed with you in mind. How did you end up resolving the problem? How could someone have made that easier?*

*or*

*Think about a time you used a system/tool that seemed perfectly designed for you. What made it so effortless? Would that same system/tool work as well for everyone?*

## Libraries are for Everyone

Our University Libraries Steps to Giving Great Service guide us on how to deliver customer service across our libraries. Given the varied student population that we serve, we must expand upon this and ask ourselves how can we ensure that our tools, devices, services, and environments are available to and usable by as many people as possible.

### Read Accessible Customer Service Practices

#### 1. Don't Make Assumptions

Many disabilities are invisible. We cannot make assumptions about how our patrons learn, communicate, or need assistance. As discussed in the University Libraries Steps to Giving Great Service, asking and listening to our users is the best way to support them.

An example of this at our Service Desk could be writing down a call number on a sheet of paper and handing it to the user, assuming they will be able to read it, know what call numbers are and how they work, find its location, etc. Instead, we can ask further questions like, "would you like me to explain how call numbers work?" and after listening, go from there.

#### 2. Language and Terminology

There are many ways in which we can better support our users through the language we use at our service desks and while communicating with others. Thinking back to the Inclusivity module, this also works to ensure our spaces are inclusive and welcoming to all.

Remember to use terms such as "accessible parking" instead of "handicap parking" and use person-first language (see more below).

#### 3. Empowerment

We want our users to feel empowered in our spaces and do as much as they can independently. When possible, we don't want to make our users feel like they do not belong or that they have to "out" themselves as having a disability to get the same level of service as everyone else.

For example, we wouldn't want to give someone directions to the second floor and say "just take the stairs right there and it'll be to your left." Instead we could

mention how to get there from both the stairs and elevator, or even better, offer to take them there and either ask if they'd prefer the stairs or elevator or just take the elevator since it is more accessible to all.

## **Apply**

*Imagine someone comes to the Service Desk and says they've been looking for a book, but can't find it on the shelf. When you look it up it's in the ASRS. You explain that the book is in the ASRS and that you can request it for them, but they don't seem to understand. How might you rephrase what you said to avoid jargon and give a clear and simple answer?*

# APPENDIX E

## UX STUDENT ASSISTANT PRE-ASSESSMENT: ANSWERS & RUBRIC

For questions 1-8:

2 points = the student's answer touches on most of the points outlined in the answer key

1 point = the student's answer is partially accurate

0 points = the student selected "I'm not sure" or include an answer that is not at all partially correct.

**1. What is the difference between an article, journal, and database?**

Articles are individual papers that are published in journals. Journals are serial publications that contain many articles. Databases are organized collections of journals and articles.

**2. What is a peer-reviewed article?**

A peer-reviewed article is a scholarly article that has gone through a formal review process from other experts in the field.

**3. What is a subject guide and when would you recommend that a student use one?**

Subject guides are created by our liaison librarians to organize resources on a particular subject or discipline. They usually include recommended journals and databases for that particular subject. They're great to recommend when helping students get started on research for a particular class or topic.

**4. When you're searching for a particular topic, and you get thousands of results, what are some common ways you could limit your results?**

- Full text
- Scholarly & Peer Review
- Content type (book, newspaper, etc.)
- Publication date
- By subject or discipline

**5. When using the main search bar on the library homepage, what kinds of materials can be found?**

Everything in the library's collection: journal articles, books, ebooks, book chapters, videos, book reviews, newspaper articles, microfilm, article citations

**6. True or false. Some articles can be found in multiple library databases.**

**True**

**7. What's the difference between a primary and secondary source?**

Primary sources are the "raw materials" or original documents used by each discipline. They provide first-hand testimony or direct evidence from that time or that

event. Some examples might be: letters, diaries, autobiographies, memoirs, maps, photographs, speeches, interviews, official records, and oral histories. A secondary source is typically a book or article that interprets or analyzes primary sources (it's *about* the thing instead of *being directly from* the thing).

**8. What is a call number and what call number classification system does the GVSU Libraries use?**

A call number is the number that tells you where you can find a particular book or material in our collection. We use the Library of Congress Classification System. (LC Classification)

**9. Scenario:**

**A student is asking you for help in locating two library resources. Their professor gave them citations for each of the resources, but they aren't sure what kind of resources they are. Please take each of the citations below and label each of their parts (for example, "Author," "title," etc.) Also, please explain what type of resources they are (ex/ journal article, newspaper, eBook, book chapter, etc.).**

Score one point for each accurately labeled part:

**Resource #1:**

O'Neil, J. M., & Egan, J. (1992). Men's and women's gender role journeys: A metaphor for healing, transition, and transformation. In B. R. Wainrib (Ed.), *Gender issues across the life cycle* (pp. 107-123). New York, NY: Springer.

**Resource #2:**

Bernstein, M. (2002). 10 tips on writing the living web. *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*, 149. Retrieved from <https://www.alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>

For questions 10-15:

2 points = the student's answer touches on most of the points outlined in the answer key

1 point = the student's answer is partially accurate

0 points = the student selected "I'm not sure" or the student's answer is not even partially correct

**1. What are two resources students can utilize to safely walk to and from the library during late nights?**

- Safe walk
- Laker Guardian app (or Rave Guardian app)

**2. If the library doesn't own a resource, what are two ways students can acquire those resources?**

- Mel
- ILL/Document Delivery

**3. What is the role of liaison librarians and how do they help students?**

Liaison librarians work with particular disciplines within the University, so every course has a specific librarian who might work with that course. Liaison librarians facilitate instruction sessions on topics that relate to information literacy. They also provide one-on-one consultations with students who need help with research. Liaisons also develop the collection (purchase materials) for their subject areas.

**4. What service does the library offer to provide students access to materials for specific courses?**

Course Reserve

**5. Why does the library offer some peer-led services?**

To help student users feel more comfortable asking questions and to provide meaningful learning opportunities for student employees.

**6. What are the Steps To Giving Great Service?**

- Be Approachable
- Understand
- Get It For Them
- Go The Extra Mile

**7. What are some things you can do to provide an excellent customer service experience?**

*(A “2” score could be given if they wrote 2-3 ways that relate to anything like the following)*

- Focus on the user (don't multitask)
- Ask open-ended followup questions
- Listen carefully
- Walk users to their destination
- Refer users to the people that can help them
- Read the user's body language

**8. What is implicit bias and how can it affect interactions at the desk?**

- Attitudes, assumptions, or stereotypes that we unconsciously hold about people or groups of people
- Can cause us to:
  - Make assumptions about what a patron wants or needs
  - Treat some patrons differently than others
  - Give better services to some patrons than others

**9. What are some ways you can provide inclusive customer service?**

*(A “2” score could be given if they wrote 2-3 ways that relate to anything like the following)*

- Not making assumptions
- Using gender-inclusive language



- Any of the **Accessible Service Practices**
- 10. What are some ways you can provide accessible customer service?**  
(A “2” score could be given if they wrote 2-3 ways that relate to anything like the following)
- Any of the **Accessible Service Practices**
- 11. Give two examples of person-first language you can use at the desk.**  
(A “2” score could be given if they wrote 2-3 ways that relate to anything like the following)
- Person with a disability
  - Person who uses a wheelchair
  - Person with dyslexia
  - Person with autism
- 12. Give two examples of gender inclusive language you can use at the desk.**  
(A “2” score could be given if they wrote 2-3 ways that relate to anything like the following)
- “The patron with the green sweater”, etc.
  - They/them pronouns

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