

Like many academic libraries, the University of Portsmouth Library employs Student Assistants who carry out a number of tasks and a lot of shelving. We were keen that they realise the benefits, beyond the monetary, of their work and so recently introduced 'employability' sessions badged as a way to 'showcase your strengths and skills in student roles'. The focus for these sessions was on transferrable skills gained in their Library roles which would help to support them in preparing for future employment.

Working alongside our colleagues in the Department of Employability we drafted and ran 2 sessions in March 2015.

The learning outcomes of the session were: to increase student confidence; to help students reflect on their roles and to identify key transferable and employability skills.

The content of the session included:

- identify key requirements and skills from their job descriptions and elaborate on these
- consider jobs that would make use of those skills and identify the core skills employers are looking for
- consider 'communication skills' – methods styles and audiences – and identify where experiences can be used as examples when applying for jobs
- consider experience gained including customer service, accuracy and numeracy, attention to detail, working in teams, time management and flexibility.

A total of nine Student Assistants (almost 50% of the total) attended the sessions and feedback indicated:

- They felt the session had helped to identify core transferrable skills in making applications
- They felt the session helped in clarifying terminology for different skill sets
- They felt more confident in general.

"The session was definitely beneficial, I feel I have gained a better understanding of how to construct my CV and future applications in a more articulate manner. The handout we were given with a list of 'action words' will prove really helpful, I have already used it to amend sections of my CV. It was really informative, thanks again!"

The Department of Employability are now in discussion with the wider community about taking the model out across the university, which employs 1000+ students.

*Lisa White, Staff Development Advisor, University of Portsmouth Library*

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