
A week in the life



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Will Reid's role is to manage all staff development activity within the converged Library and Student Support service. He also carries a monitoring and evaluative role for staff and students in partner institutions. He has been in the current role since May 2009. The role is in recognition of the increasing demands on training and development at an individual, team, department and organisational level for such a large converged service.

MONDAY

As on most days, I start with tea and the iPad, checking news, emails, Facebook and Twitter. No surprises, so the day should be as planned... but this rarely happens!

We have two postgraduate students on placement from the MA/MSc Information and Library Management award at LJMU's Business School. We have been offering these placements for five years and they are generally very productive for the students and the service. Both are excellent students, so it does not take much to check and make sure they are on track with assigned projects and meetings. Working with the students always gives me a pleasing reassurance that the profession still attracts some excellent people – and enthuses them!

Next it is on to prepping for a managers' meeting at 10.00. With a converged service of what was library, IT support and student administration services, it is essential to ensure that the various developments and strategies are addressed at an operational level. The meeting is chaired by our Associate Director, and covers a wide range of operational issues. Staff development is a standing item on the agenda and provides a useful marker for me to report, advise and seek input from colleagues. Today is no different and I touch on training for the student enrolment system,

leadership programmes, IT support training, site meetings and customer care sessions.

One of our regular staff meetings is held in the afternoon. We deliver two meetings per site every month, to inform staff of challenges, changes, developments and opportunities. They are also very useful in getting staff feedback and input. I have a 5–10 minute slot on the development matters, so I always try to get there. Main area today though is our proposed new working model for evenings and weekends.

TUESDAY

With no planned meetings today, it is a good opportunity to catch up on a few topics and people.

I attend the Partnerships Forum, a six-monthly meeting to which the university invites staff from collaborative partners: further education colleges, private institutions, and validated partners. This allows us to present and get feedback on a whole range of matters, from student complaint procedures to meeting new Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidelines. I have been asked to arrange something on how partner staff and students can access our resources and get IT support, so I talk to the staff who will be delivering this.

I also check in with our administration support team and we agree on how we can use Microsoft Share Point to gather attendance records for staff events.

After lunch I am asked by a staff member for a brief discussion on the university's policy for sponsoring staff to undertake degrees. This colleague wishes to undertake a degree but is unsure as to what support can be provided from September 2012. I outline the background and advise him to complete the paperwork with his manager and submit an application.

In Liverpool the main library services have a very strong history of working together on a range of issues through the Liverpool Learning Group, comprising the three university libraries, Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts, Liverpool City Libraries and the Liverpool Community College. We hold a 'Libraries Together' conference every two years, and this usually attracts around 80–90 staff. I am on the organising committee and spend time pursuing colleagues for abstracts, and e-mailing other committee members on a range

of issues. This year's event will be at the Sydney Jones Library at the University of Liverpool.

From then on the afternoon becomes a bit disjointed as I deal with urgent queries from partner college staff, plus a request to clarify working-time hours and regulations.

WEDNESDAY

A slightly more relaxed commute this morning, as I am at our I M Marsh campus all day, contributing to two site meetings. This campus is in the suburbs and is only a five-minute drive from home. Both sessions go well, and the consultative sessions get a lot of feedback. We are asking for staff feedback on recording any unusual incidents in the learning resource centre as we think the whole process is out of date, and get some really useful examples.

Wednesday is often a check on the weekly online staff newsletter for which the deadline comes around extremely quickly. I write two items, the first on the outcomes of our staff development days held earlier in the year, the second a thank you to our two placement students and the staff who supported them. I also ask one of our IT support team to write an article highlighting the introduction of the new Blackboard mobile app which is being introduced on Thursday. Linking to the app is my last action of the day, before going home to relax and watch my third favourite team, Liverpool, get to Wembley...

THURSDAY

Another day, another destination... this time it is the University's Art and Design Academy for a meeting of the Partnership Forum mentioned above. There is a reasonable turnout with representatives from the Isle of Man and Fermanagh alongside regional partners from the further education and private sectors. There are some very useful sessions on the annual monitoring process for partners, the new academic framework, academic misconduct and the role of the link tutor. My two colleagues give a very well received demonstration for partner college staff on accessing and using our resources. Plenty of questions and requests for follow-up sessions.

We have a general discussion on the forum and how to make it even more relevant. Given the distances some colleagues travel, I suggest booking an IT suite for the day and offering drop-in sessions to get updates on new applications and

resources. This seems to get some support. Two teachers from a local further education college take the opportunity (unsolicited!) to say that the support provided by L&SS is fantastic and always top rate. This is always good to hear, and, again, I feed this back!

FRIDAY

Slightly longer route to work. My youngest son has some casual work in our learning resource centre on the other side of town so we drop him off before wending our way across the city.

The morning is fairly busy with requests for information and writing another newsletter article. I then take some time to read some articles/tweets on higher education and library matters. Next is a phone conversation with our Training and Conferences Team to double check bookings and provide some feedback on recent events.

Instead of a slow Friday POETS (Pop Off Early Tomorrow's Saturday) I have to deal with a couple of new matters. We have been approached by the university's Academic Enhancement Unit (AEU) to contribute to the revision of the LJMU Teaching and Learning Strategy. I have been brought in to help devise the session and to schedule times, rooms, staff, etc. Time is tight so it is another round of urgent emails and calls. It is important that we have our say in this to embed our own strategy at the core of the university's policy-making process.

Straight from that into a meeting with our new Business Control Team Leader to review financial audits and processes, and to ensure that all staff who handle cash receive appropriate training. We go over timings, types of delivery and which sessions staff should attend. We then discuss the timetable for a school student about to commence a placement with us.

The planned final meeting on revising our web pages for partner college staff is postponed, so I heave a sigh of relief and get ready for the weekend! It's been a hectic week but a good one for illustrating the range of issues the job throws up. The job requires lots of proactive networking and people skills. It is also very rewarding in a range of areas, from organising the student placements to seeing how your work fits into the service and university strategy.