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# Library Student Assistant Handbook (Approved)

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## **Henderson Library Student Assistant Handbook**

Welcome to the staff of the Henderson Library! Student Assistants are critically important to the Library and we hope that your work experience here will be rewarding for you. Your contribution to our efforts in attaining the Library's goals will be appreciated by your supervisors and other Library personnel, as well as our many patrons.

As a service organization, our main goal is to help our patrons fulfill their informational needs. When you join the staff as a student assistant you become a representative of the Library, so always make an effort to be courteous and helpful. If you cannot answer a question, find a staff member who can. Misinformation can be worse than no information. Directing a patron incorrectly can cause a great deal of frustration, especially if this happens repeatedly. Even if you do not deal directly with patrons, remember that the care and accuracy you put into your work will help them locate what they need. We expect our student assistants to be considerate, responsible, and conscientious on the job.

The following are general guidelines which apply to all student assistants who work for the Library. Your supervisor will inform you of more specific guidelines from the department in which you work.

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**Please read these guidelines carefully.**

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### **Breaks**

A 15 minute paid break may be taken if you are working four or more consecutive hours. Breaks may not be taken at the beginning or end of your shift. Your supervisor has the authority to schedule your break.

Students are expected to sign out when leaving and sign in when returning from a meal break. If your shift is longer than six consecutive hours, you must take a meal break of at least 30 minutes.

### **Dress**

Appropriate business dress is required throughout the Library, but some departments have more specific requirements. Clothing that is not acceptable includes revealing clothing, cut-offs, short shorts, extremely short shorts, clothing with holes or slits, leggings or tights without long tops, or clothing with a message that might be offensive to anyone else. Bare feet are not acceptable for safety reasons. Footwear should be chosen to avoid the possibility of injury. For example, sandals should not be worn when moving book trucks or anything that might fall and injure one's foot.

### **Emergency Plan**

For their personal safety student assistants are expected to be familiar with the Library emergency plan. If no one has explained the emergency plan to you, talk to your supervisor.

## Employment Regulations – Federal, State of Georgia, and Georgia Southern

### Eligibility

To maintain your eligibility to work, you must be at least a half-time student. You must not drop below six credit hours per semester to remain on the payroll. If you are a graduate student you must not drop below five credit hours per semester. Notify your supervisor immediately of any change in the number of hours for which you are enrolled.

### Paychecks & Time Sheets

In order to receive a paycheck, all student employees must enroll in ADP Self Service and add e-time. Students are expected to sign in and out of ADP for every shift worked. If you do not sign in and out for a given shift, you will not be paid for that shift. Exceptions to this policy are made when your supervisor is required to project your hours in advance.

It is imperative that you register your work hours in ADP. Students occasionally forget to either sign in or out for a shift. If you have forgotten, contact your supervisor as soon as possible. Your supervisor will enter your missing arrival or departure time. Your supervisor will only be able to enter work time to which (s)he can personally attest.

### Schedules

Student Supervisors and the employees of the GSU Library recognize that your school work is, and should be, your first priority. Nevertheless, your ability to adhere to a certain schedule is a basic precondition for employment.

Please provide your supervisor with a copy of your GSU-generated class schedule. You and your supervisor will draw up a work schedule based on your class schedule that you will be expected to maintain. If you cannot work a given shift or need to adjust your hours in any way, you must get permission in advance from your immediate supervisor. If you are ill or have an emergency, you must call your supervisor to let him/her, know that you cannot work your scheduled hours. It is your responsibility to keep handy your supervisor's phone number.

***Institutional Students:*** The number of hours you may work will be decided by your supervisor. However, the maximum possible hours you may work per week while classes are in session is 25. The University does not permit overtime. (If you have another job on campus in addition to your library job, it is your responsibility to insure it that your combined weekly hours do not exceed 25 per week during the semester and 40 during intersession. Students who work in excess of 25 hours in one week are subject to termination.)

***International Students:*** You must hold a valid visa that permits work in the United States and be enrolled as a full-time student (12 hrs.). During the regular academic term (fall and spring), on campus work by international students is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session and 40 hours per week

during intersession (as long as you have maintained your full-time status for the Fall and Spring semesters). This is a federal regulation and applies to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Some international students are employed in more than one department. The 20-hour limit is the maximum for all positions. (If you have another job on campus in addition to your library job, it is your responsibility to insure that your combined weekly hours do not exceed 20 per week during the semester and 40 during intersession. Students who work in excess of 40 hours in one week are subject to termination.)

***Work Study Students:*** The number of hours you may work will be decided by your supervisor. However, the maximum possible hours you may work is 144 hours per semester and 25 hours per week while classes are in session. The University does not permit overtime. Only students enrolled in summer terms may work during the summer. (If you have another job on campus in addition to your library job, it is your responsibility to insure it that your combined weekly hours do not exceed 25 during the semester. Students who work in excess of 25 hours in one week are subject to termination.)

### **Termination of Employment**

Students are expected give supervisors at least two weeks notice before leaving a job. Certain rule violations in each department are grounds for immediate dismissal. Your supervisor will make you aware of such rules at the start of your employment. You can expect to be given a warning for other violations.

### **Equipment**

Use of equipment (computers, copiers, fax, etc.) by student assistants is limited to library business only. Students may not use computers assigned to non-student Library employees without permission

### **Exams**

Your supervisor is prepared to adjust your work schedule during exam weeks. As with any other schedule modification, you must make arrangements with your supervisor in advance.

### **Food & Drink**

Food and/or drinks are permitted in the library. However, they should not appear in public service areas. Beverage containers must have tops or lids (coffee cups with lids, twist top bottles, travel mugs). Employees are encouraged to use room 2210E or Zach Brews for meals and snacks. We ask that you always clean up the area after using it.

## **Department Guidelines**

### **Access:**

Neither food nor drink is allowed at the service desk. Drinks and snacks can be stored on shelves a short distance away, and employees may take a couple of steps back and eat and drink when times are slow.

### **Information Services:**

Food is not allowed at the Information Desk. However, drinks will be allowed if you work more than two consecutive hours at the desk. Beverage containers must have tops or lids (coffee cups with lids, twist top bottles, travel mugs). Employees are encouraged to use room 2210E or Zach Brews for your lunches and snacking. We ask that you always clean up the area after using it.

## **Headphones**

The use of headphones creates a sense of unapproachability and is therefore not permitted in public service areas.

## **Department Guidelines**

### **Collection & Resource Services:**

Headphones are allowed when working on database maintenance. Headphone use is governed by the supervisor

## **Identification**

Student assistants wear ID badges while on duty. Badges will be provided.

## **Department Guidelines**

### **Information Services:**

Student assistants are required to wear both a colored vest and an ID badge.

## **Parking**

Student Assistants are not permitted to park in spaces reserved for University faculty/staff with 24 hour enforcement. The spaces are provided only for employees with faculty/staff designated hang tags.

## **Phones**

Library phones are for business use, and students are expected to follow the University phone etiquette included in this handbook. Cell phone use is discouraged except in case of emergency.

## **Department Guidelines**

### **Collection & Resource Services:**

Cell phones are to be stored at the beginning of each shift. Exceptions must be approved by the supervisor

### **Recommendations**

Your library job will provide you with the opportunity to showcase skills you already have or to develop new skills important to future employers. Dependability, the ability to work with others, initiative, problem-solving skills, and/or attention to detail are traits many employers seek. You may wish to ask your supervisor to provide references for employment or graduate/professional school.

### **Visitors**

Students are not permitted to receive visitors during work hours. Please discourage your friends from phoning or visiting when you are working.

## Dealing with Unhappy Patrons

In the Library we want to do everything we can to provide courteous, helpful service to our patrons. However, no matter how hard we try -- sometimes patrons are unhappy. A key part of giving good service is learning to successfully handle the upset patron. Complaints give us the opportunity to find out when something is wrong, and a chance to fix the problem and provide assistance.

### How can you handle an unhappy patron?

There are six basic **positive** steps you can take that are helpful:

1. **Listen with interest.** Make responses that show you are listening such as: "I see.", "I can understand." or "I can appreciate your problem."
2. **Empathize.** Put yourself in the other person's place.
3. **Ask questions and listen carefully to the answers.**
4. **Ask questions that require some thought by the patron.** If you can, suggest one or more alternative resolutions that might be taken.
5. **Apologize without blaming.**
6. **Ask the patron to take an action step that resolves the problem.**

By using these techniques, you can usually calm even an angry patron, which allows you both to focus on solving the problem.

### A few things to avoid:

1. **Don't directly challenge the person.** Even if the person is wrong, don't attempt to prove you're right. The goal is to solve the problem, not to debate who's at fault.
2. **Don't let the conversation wander from the specific problem.** The goal is to solve the problem.
3. **Don't participate in fault finding.** It doesn't help anyone to shift the blame to another department or person.
4. **Don't let personal feelings interfere.** Remain calm and collected and always be sure to use courtesy and tact.

Keep in mind that the complaint is not against you personally and that it's human to make mistakes. Nobody is perfect and that includes the person who is complaining.

If you show the individual you care enough to remedy the complaint and continue to use positive

communication techniques you will turn most dissatisfied patrons around.

If you have been as courteous as possible and have done everything you can to solve a problem but the patron is still not satisfied, politely excuse yourself and seek a supervisor's assistance.

On rare occasions a patron may get so angry -- with or without justification -- that (s)he becomes abusive. Never attempt to handle that type of behavior alone. Seek help from another employee or from a supervisor if available. **Do not hesitate to call Public Safety (478-5234) to assist you in this type of situation if a supervisor is not available.**

Be sure that you know the policies in your department and know to whom problems should be referred.

Handling complaints is an important skill, and even though they aren't pleasant they can show us ways to improve library service.

## Phone Etiquette- The Georgia Southern Way

When answering the phone at Georgia Southern we use a pleasant, friendly, and professional greeting. And we answer the phone The Georgia Southern Way, which includes the following

**Greeting (“Good Morning - Afternoon”)**  
**Identify Your Office (Always)**  
**Identify Yourself (Always)**

By using these components, we can make a positive first impression on any caller. A positive first impression sets the tone of the conversation, enabling us to do our best job possible in assisting callers.

### Phone Basics

If a second line rings while you are taking a message on the first one, **ask** the first caller to **"Please Hold"** for a minute. Answer the second call; if it is one you can handle quickly, do so. If not, determine how to avoid keeping any caller on hold longer than 30 seconds. Always thank your callers for holding.

Become familiar with the program buttons on the phone you use. Ask your supervisor to explain what they mean and learn to use them.

### The ABC's of Phone Etiquette

- A** All callers are important.
- B** Be brief but helpful.
- C** Courteous replies are best.
- D** Don't leave a caller hanging on the line.
- E** Even angry callers can hang up satisfied.
- F** A frequently called numbers list is helpful.
- G** Give information accurately in a pleasant voice.
- H** Hang up gently.
- I** Identify yourself and your department with a **"smile."**
- J** Just to be sure, confirm message information.
- K** Keep a pad and pencil handy.
- L** Listen to the caller.
- M** Make every effort to be **helpful and cooperative.**
- N** Needless to say, know when to transfer a call AND to what number.
- O** Offer to help and tell how.
- P** Personal calls should be infrequent.
- Q** Quickly and as promptly as possible answer the ring.
- R** Ring a transfer call for the caller.
- S** Say **"Thank You"** and use the caller's name.
- T** Take time to understand the caller.
- U** Use a **"voice with a smile."**
- V** **Voice that smiles--**that is worth repeating.
- W** Welcome the caller with a friendly greeting.
- X** Xenophobia is unnecessary.

- Y** You are representing the Library.  
**Z** Zero-in on the caller's wants and needs.

### **Completing Phone Messages**

1. Confirm the caller's name, the correct spelling and to whom the message should go.
2. Record the date and time of the call.
3. Request the caller's complete phone number including the area code and when the call can be returned.
4. Confirm the message.
5. Repeat the message to the caller for their approval and write it clearly. Thank them by name for calling and assure them you will see (insert name) gets the message.
6. Be sure to say "**Thank You**" whenever appropriate.
7. Place the message for whom it is intended in an agreed upon location.
8. Network communication via E-Mail message should be thorough and include all information listed above.