

## Student employee case study

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**Name:** Bethany Parsons

**Degree Course:** MPhil Classics

**Current year of study [if applicable]:** 2nd year (4th Part-Time)

**Job title in Information Services Group:** Student IT Assistant



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### Describe your role and responsibilities in the department you worked for within the Information Services Group?

I first began working for the Information Services Group (ISG) in December 2015, when students were first recruited to help deliver disability computing support (DCS). This involved setting up laptops with specialist accessibility software and providing on-call services in case of any technical problems.

After helping out with DCS over four exam diets, I was contacted by Rad Sargeant, the IT Services Manager in the Main Library. Rad was creating a new IT Support Desk and DCS would be rolled into this - creating a pool of well-trained Student IT Assistants who could deliver frontline IT support services and specialised support during exams. I applied and worked in the March 2017 – May 2017 pilot project. When the pilot project was successful and gained funding to continue, I applied to be a member of the team.

The IT Support Desk complimented my skills and experience in IT and customer service. Not only did I learn how to solve a variety of routine problems; from connecting to Eduroam to installing Microsoft Office, I also developed the problem-solving skills needed to tackle any problem that presented itself - such as Googling strange error messages to find out if there was a common solution! I would watch what the second-line team (the full-time members of ISG who worked alongside us on the desk) would do so that I could try these solutions myself in future.

### What interested you in this specific role?

I have always had a background interest in IT. I grew up during the age of Windows 97 and the early days of the Internet through to the advent of laptops and smartphones. Advanced communication and information technology went from something I saw on Star Trek to something that fits in my pocket. I pursued academic subjects at University, but always kept up to date with developments in technology. Both the DCS and the IT Support Desk work interested me as a way of developing professional experience of working with IT, as IT skills



continue to become more and more essential across the world of work. Working on the IT Support Desk and assisting with DCS strengthened my interest in a career in IT.

### **What have you learnt from this experience and what impact have you made?**

The main takeaway from this experience is that, with the right training, anyone can learn how to troubleshoot computer problems. But it takes communication and interpersonal skills to deliver an excellent service. Many people feel intimidated or overwhelmed by technology, so I have learned how to take on a supportive and reassuring approach as I help diagnose and fix their computer problems.

The IT Helpdesk also helped me learn to multi-task under pressure, as juggling shifting priorities is a real skill. Working part time and studying part time has helped me develop great organisational and time management skills, as no two days look the same.

The main impact I have made in this role is on DCS. I redeveloped the training for Student IT Assistants, thinking about what I would have liked to know and practice before I first undertook DCS work. On top of this, I redesigned the DCS procedure manuals to streamline the information needed to help Student IT Assistants complete their DCS work. I think this work will continue to benefit the service long after I have moved on.

### **How do you plan to use this experience to benefit your future career objectives?**

I have already been able to use this experience to benefit my future career, as I have secured a permanent full-time post within the University as the Technology Support Officer on the Holyrood Campus, working for the Moray House School of Education and Centre for Open Learning. I begin my new career in IT in March 2019, after the completion of my MPhil thesis.

### **What advice would you give fellow peers/students or graduates looking to get a job with the Information Services Group?**

Take full advantage of the experiences which are on offer and any opportunity to develop additional skills. Working for Rad Sargeant on the IT Support Desk has been an amazing experience - not simply because of the interesting and varied day-to-day work environment, but because of the interest Rad takes in the professional development of all the Student IT Assistants and the opportunities he finds for us to branch out into all sorts of different projects.