



## Line manager case study

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**Name:** SarahLouise McDonald

**Job Title:** Academic Support Librarian

**Department:** Library Academic Support

### What made you decide to hire a student?

We've previously had students work with our team for short periods, and the work they've completed in the past has always been interesting and useful. When funding was available and my manager suggested recruiting a student to assist with the ongoing projects we had lined up I jumped at the chance!

### Do you think students have benefitted from the work experience?

I absolutely do. I think the student I've been working with recently has been introduced to some new ideas about areas of specialism within his subject area, and I believe that he will take the things he's learned about and incorporate them into both his work and study in future.

### What do you enjoy most from the experience of working with students?

I enjoy working with students because of their enthusiasm. I think every student I've had the benefit of working with has provided a much needed reality check on the gap between what we (professional services staff) think they need, and what they actually want to know. It feels a bit humbling to ask 'but is this how you actually access information?! Does this make sense to you?' but they always respond a) kindly, b) with new ideas, and c) in a way that reminds me that we all want the same thing – for students to have the best educational experience possible. The students who apply for these types of job are engaged. I feel like it's more than just a job to them, it's a real opportunity to enhance their own learning and help their peers.

### What advice would you give staff who are considering recruiting students?

Do it! You won't regret it. I think I've learned every bit as much from our student workers as they have from us so, as with all good things in life, the more you put into it the more you'll get out of it. Co-creation is key – give them something to get their teeth into and see where they take you. Personally I found it incredibly energising!

### Finally, why do you think on-campus employment is important for the student experience at the University?

I think providing opportunities for students to get more involved in the work of the university will deepen their connection to their institution and make them more invested in their studies. Gaining an appreciation for the work that goes on behind the scenes can only help them feel like they belong, and make their time here more meaningful. Coming to university can be quite isolating for a variety of reasons, but helping people build a community around themselves will set them up for success both academically and in preparation for the world outside academia. In return we get the opportunity to keep learning with them, and that makes us all better.