



STUDENT PARTNERS

WORKING WITH STUDENTS ACROSS CUSTOMER SERVICES

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Library Assistants with Additional Responsibilities
Friday 12th April 2024

Libraries, Museums
and Galleries



ABOUT US

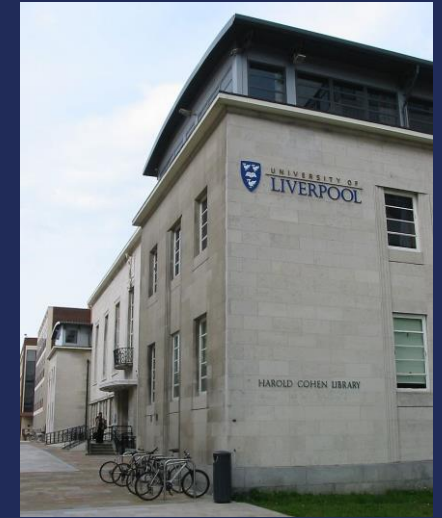
Multi-site: 3 libraries, Victoria Gallery & Museum, Garstang Museum, and Institute of Popular Music archive

Libraries as the “fourth home” for our students

- Popular and high-occupancy spaces
- 3rd in the Russell Group (NSS, 2023)
- Core library services (study, support, inspire)
- Supplementary and triage services

LMG contribution to Student Success Framework

- Active support around Academic and Personal Success
- Future Success – potential to develop further



STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

PROGRAMME

- Proof-of-concept project for 23/24 academic year
- 18 student roles working in Customer Services and across the department
- 10 hours per week, Grade 3, 1-year fixed term contracts
- 18 specialist projects across LMG led by experts in the field e.g., Open Access, User Experience, decolonising reading lists, digitising archive collections
- Cohort Activity: Customer Services shift and weekly activity as a cohort of 18, such as supporting outreach events, running Coffee and Chat, meeting with key stakeholders.
- Provide a breadth of experience and the opportunity to view LMG as a potential career path.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide rich development and employment opportunities in **support of students' future success**, particularly those from backgrounds or circumstances which are underrepresented in the library and heritage sectors;
- To have a **visible, branded, student colleague presence** across LMG to help foster a sense of belonging and community in support of students' personal success;
- To support a thriving on-campus experience through visibly **embedding the student voice at the centre of our services** and high-footfall spaces at a time of development;
- To support the **development of existing staff**, exposing them to new perspectives and ideas;
- To add to the **resilience of library staffing** – particularly student-facing services – in a way that allows flexibility to meet the changing needs of our users and requirements of our spaces.

RECRUITMENT

THE NUMBERS

331

Applications received

18

Specialist projects taken forward

35%

Of applications were from an ethnic minority background

33

Applicants were invited to the final interview stage

79

Applicants were from areas considered 'low participation' in POLAR4 data

18

Student Partners joined the team on 9th October!*

*38% consider themselves to have a disability or health condition, 44% are LGBTQ+; 25% are from an ethnic minority

STUDENT PARTNER PROGRAMME LAYOUT

10 HOURS PER WEEK

5 HOURS PROJECT
WORK



2/3 HOURS
CUSTOMER SERVICES

2/3 HOURS
'COHORT' ACTIVITY



STUDENT PARTNER PROJECTS

An eclectic variety of projects, reflecting the multi-faceted nature of Libraries, Museums and Galleries at University of Liverpool

5 hours per week (of 10 overall)

Member of LMG staff from relevant department assigned to student partner during project hours – known as Project Sponsors

Clue is in the name! More focused on a fixed term project to be completed or demonstrably advanced during course of term-time role



STUDENT PARTNER PROJECTS

SYDNEY JONES LIBRARY



SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING CONTENT
STOCK DEVELOPMENT
DECOLONISING OF SCI FI
CUNARD PHOTOGRAPHY
USER EXPERIENCE
IPM THE SHELTON COLLECTION
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS HISTORY

VICTORIA GALLERY & MUSEUM



CREATURES OF THE NILE
EXHIBITION

HAROLD COHEN LIBRARY



SUBSCRIPTIONS/ ENDNOTE 20
ACCESSIBILITY
SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT
OPEN RESEARCH
DECOLONISING READING LISTS
COLLECTION EVALUATION

GARSTANG MUSEUM



GARSTANG CURATORIAL
ASSISTANT

STUDENT PARTNER CUSTOMER SERVICES & COHORT ACTIVITY

Remaining 5 hours split between core Customer Services duties (working on service desks and roving) and additional Cohort Activity, ranging from specific engagement events such as Coffee & Chat and social media content, primarily for our Tik Tok and Instagram accounts.

To improve visibility (in the most literal sense) and understanding of project whilst with Customer Services Team, Student Partners wearing orange tees and hoodies on duty.

Colour choice got amixed response



STUDENT PARTNER – CUSTOMER SERVICES

6 hours training in first 2 weeks on key Customer Services processes to get Student Partners up to speed and comfortable as soon as possible

Time is split between 3 different service points: Reception, Help Desk and Roving

After 2-week training period, eased gently into shifts with plenty of shadowing resulting in confidence to work alone during Customer Services shifts

1-1's with mentors ensured that progress and confidence was gauged regularly



STUDENT PARTNER – CUSTOMER SERVICES

Reception

Primarily dealing with customers entering and exiting libraries

Requires good understanding of sentry software, reasons for entry being refused and how to proceed when this occurs

Help Desk

More focus on core library processes (catalogue queries, space bookings, visitor applications etc)

2-week training at start of programme largely focused on these processes

Roving

Dealing with queries both pro-actively and reactively whilst walking around the library. Contactable by mobile phone and often first point of contact for noise complaints and book searches



STUDENT PARTNER COHORT ACTIVITY – ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Coffee & Chat – formerly ran by Customer Services Team created possible strain on core services, student partners alleviated this by running entire event with minimal supervision

Library Pulse Survey – student partners able to massively improve engagement and response to survey, providing useful data and feedback on a much bigger scale than previously

Knowhow pilot sessions – Library team specialising in additional study session on topics such as structuring essays, referencing etc. Student partners in unique and ideal position of staff/student hybrid to receive and give detailed feedback



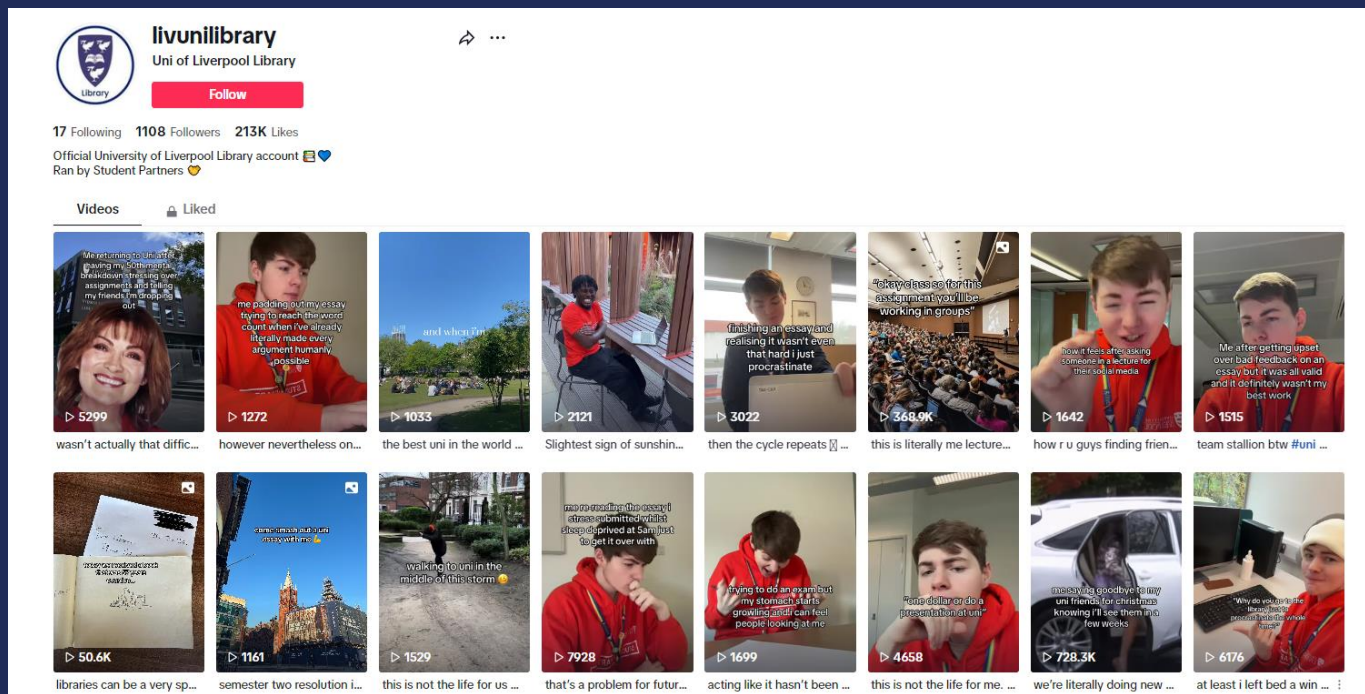
STUDENT PARTNER COHORT ACTIVITY – SOCIAL MEDIA

Student partners given full access and control over Library TikTok account

TikTok the least formal of library social media accounts, so more room for playful & fun content

Largely dormant until this point, improved engagement has been successful, one post with 728.3k views

Cohort activity ideal time for this as this is the only time all student partners are together, became a good tool for bonding the group



ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT PARTNER MENTORS

- 3 Library Assistants (us!) were given the opportunity to take on Additional Responsibilities, as part of the University's Additional Responsibilities, Acting Up and Secondment Policy
- The role developed from one fixed-term post to 3 LA's having the opportunity, in response to a call for more development opportunities for staff in Customer Services
- Additional Responsibilities include:
 - Mentoring the Student Partners – regular point of contact, 'friendly face' and pastoral support for our mentees, including 1-2-1 meetings
 - Design and deliver CS training, shadowing and monitoring progress
 - Assisting the wider CS team with onboarding, rotas, etc
 - Supporting the Student Opportunities Manager with administrative tasks and project evaluation
 - The opportunity to present at external events to promote the project across the sector

Important opportunities for development – professional and personal growth in the role

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Presentation skills
Confidence
Mentorship
Decision-Making
Leadership
Evaluation
Communication
Teamwork
ACLIP Evidence
Administrative
Time Management
Training
Networking
Reflective Practice

STUDENT PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

Primary Objectives: Provide a working environment to support our Student Partners to develop both personally, professionally, and academically.

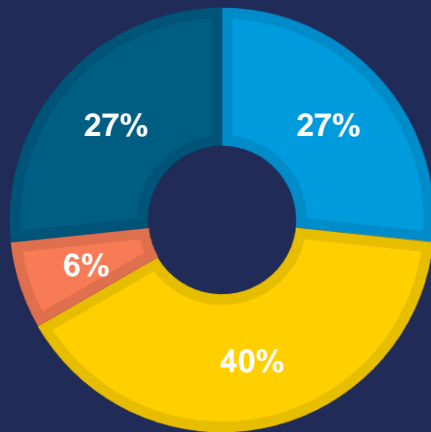
Student employment is rising – between 2022–23 the proportion of university students in paid employment whilst studying has risen from 45% to 55% according to the Higher Education Report.

The burden of balancing studies and working commitments could have negative social and psychological repercussions, resulting in increasing amounts of stress and fatigue.

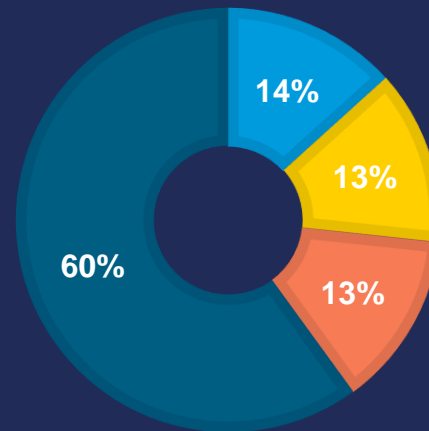
STUDENT PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

SYNERGY BETWEEN WORK & ACADEMIC ROLES

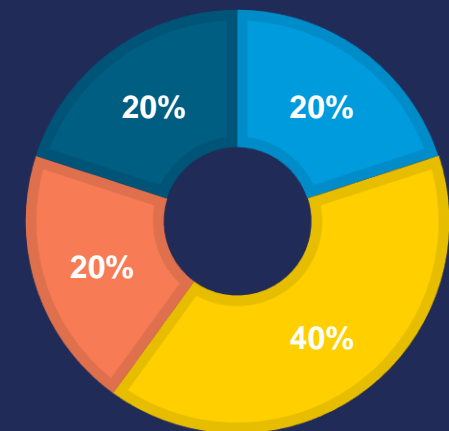
SOMETIMES I TURN MY ASSIGNMENT IN LATE BECAUSE I HAVE TOO MUCH ON MY PLATE



I HAVE LESS TIME TO PREPARE FOR LECTURES, SEMINARS AND OTHER ASSIGNMENTS



I FEEL LIKE I HAVE LESS TIME TO DO SOCIAL AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

STUDENT PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

SYNERGY BETWEEN WORK & ACADEMIC ROLES

- We surveyed our Student Partners to see how they felt working within the library affected their academic work and usage of library services/resources.
- Familiarity and greater comfort in using the Library as a Study Space:
 - *"The Library feels more familiar"*
 - *"I feel much more comfortable here because it feels more familiar [...] I'm more comfortable asking staff questions and seeking assistance"*
 - *"Being comfortable in using library services and generally comfortable in the environment has really helped with my focus whilst studying. Hadn't realised how much my lack of study space has previously affected me."*



STUDENT PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

SYNERGY BETWEEN WORK & ACADEMIC ROLES

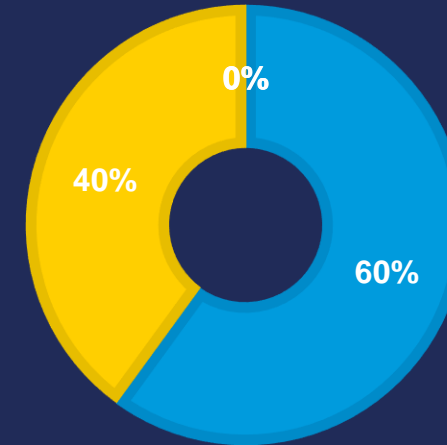
Library Work as **Educational Employment**

Since working in the library, many of our Student Partners have expressed that they have a greater awareness of the resources and services available to them as students.

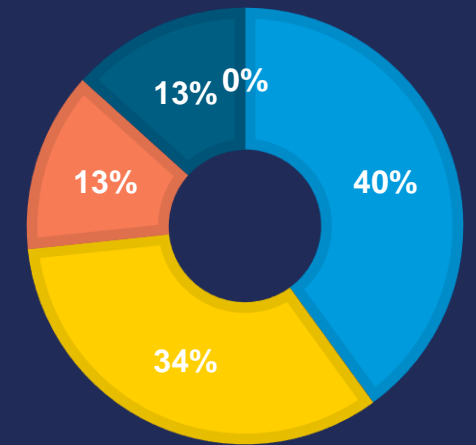
This ranges from quotidian processes such as **printing, borrowing equipment** from the helpdesk, **booking study spaces**, and **reserving books**, to more sophisticated provisions including **meeting with a Liaison Librarian**, accessing **Special Collections**, **SCONUL**, and **Inter-Library Loans**

Many also expressed that they were much more confident in finding physical and digital resources on the library catalogue.

Working in the library has introduced me to services I wasn't previous aware of



I'm more likely to meet with a Liaison Librarian



Strongly Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Strongly Disagree

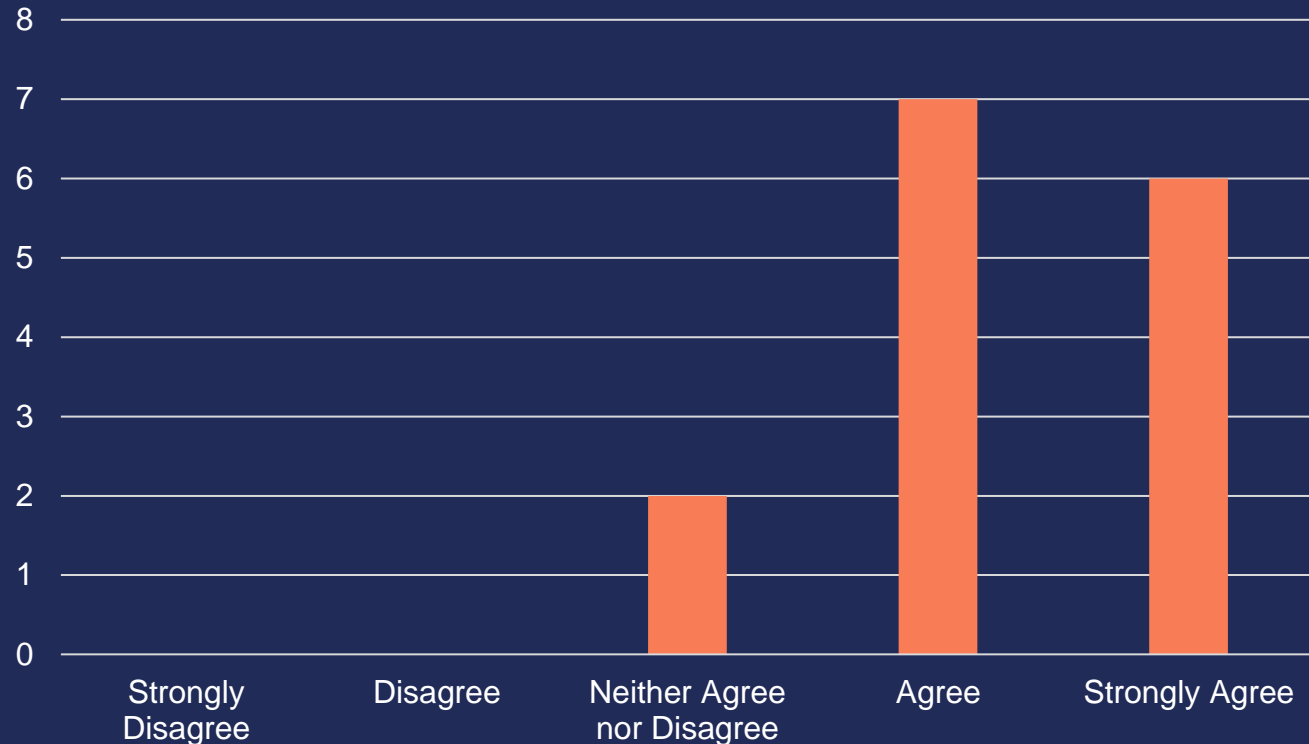
Agree

Disagree

STUDENT PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

SYNERGY BETWEEN WORK & ACADEMIC ROLES

"Given me tools to study/work harder on my own course, given me an appreciation for the library and its resources on my studies. Given me more real life work experience."



Working in the Library has had a Positive Impact on my Academic Studies

STUDENT PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

SYNERGY BETWEEN WORK & ACADEMIC ROLES

Other Benefits

- Flexible Working Hours/Schedule.
- Routinization of work and study life.
- Social support
- Perquisites

"I feel more organised because I need to factor in work in my timetable. I also end up meeting friends or people I know in the library, which helps with social life."



STUDENT PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

Transferrable Skills & Employment Experience

Experience of working within the Information Sector

- A few of our Student Partners have expressed a strong interest in pursuing careers within this sector – Museums/Heritage, Archives, and Libraries. Gaining experience in both the frontline library services coupled with the specialised knowledge of their projects ensures that the programme is a great stepping stone for future careers in library, information and heritage sectors.
- Many are not on traditional pathways for this career i.e. STEM subjects, and have never considered a career in this area. Building their own networks within the University in addition to LMG.
- First introduction to paid employment in the UK.

Evidence to go on their Higher Education Achievement Report



STUDENT PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

Transferrable Skills & Employment Experience

Teamwork
Digital Literacy
Leadership
Decision-Making
Communication
Problem-Solving

Time Management
Interpersonal
Multi-Tasking
Event Planning & Organisation

“Customer Service skills that she is acquiring is one of the best things about the role because she didn’t have any experience of this.”

ADVANTAGES TO CUSTOMER SERVICES

Benefits to the Library & Customer Services

Improved Service Resilience

- Student Partners have supplemented the customer service team, and helped ensure that our service points were sufficiently staffed.
- Increased diversity across within the customer service team.
- Embedding students' unique experience within our daily operations.

"Big thanks to the guy in the orange hoody for helping me out"

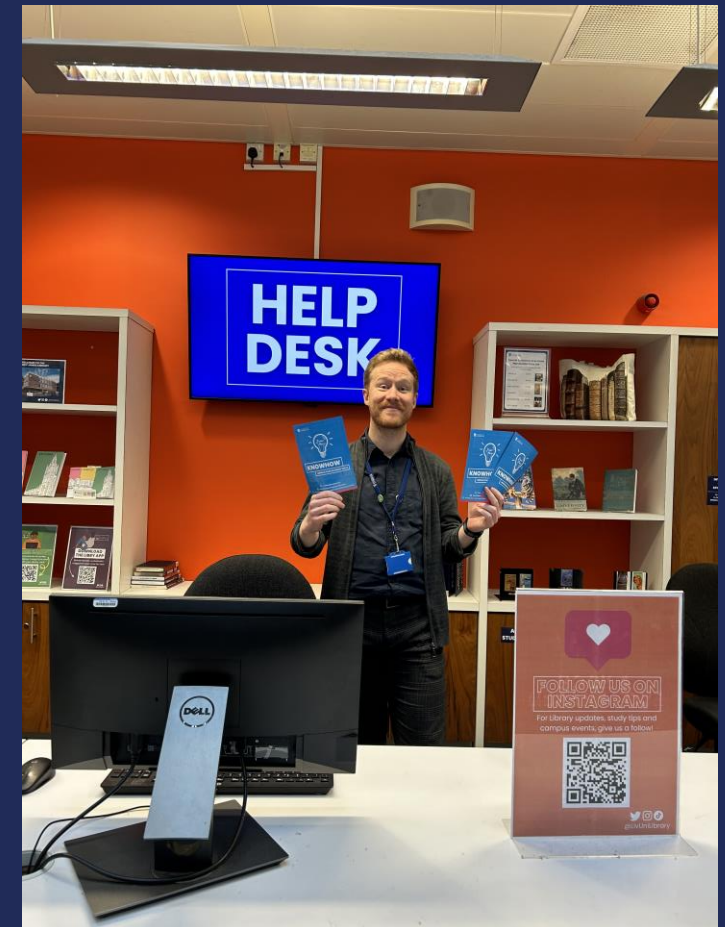


ADVANTAGES TO CUSTOMER SERVICES

Benefits to the Library & Customer Services

Training & Internal Processes

- Onboarding eighteen brand new staff/Student Partners to confidently operate our service points.
- Encouraged a re-evaluation and standardisation of training for all staff. Instead of discretionary shadowing
 - Structured training
 - Check-listing operations
- Ensured there's less disparity in staff capabilities, which has had a positive impact on the service provided.

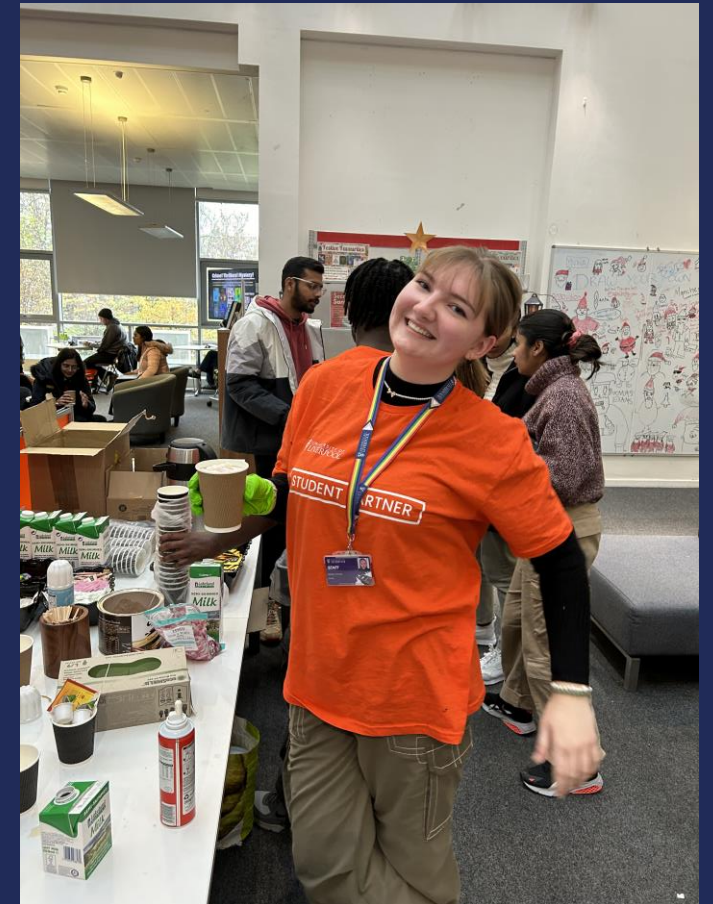


ADVANTAGES TO CUSTOMER SERVICES

Student Engagement

Increased student engagement both physically & digitally.

- Student Partners have taken over the libraries' outreach and student engagement events (Coffee & Chat) – taking the pressure off the cs team.
- Student Partners were tasked with organising the event(s), planning content, advertisement, running operations, getting feedback.
- Over 150 feedback responses were attained in February 2024 Coffee & Chat compared to just 25 comments in Feb 2023.
- Over 2,000 responses for the Library Pulse Survey – exceeded expectations

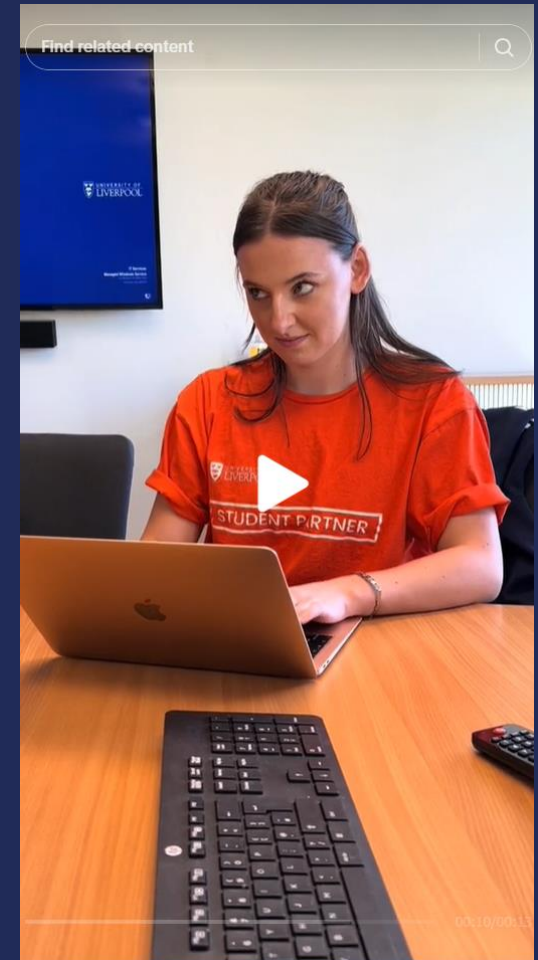
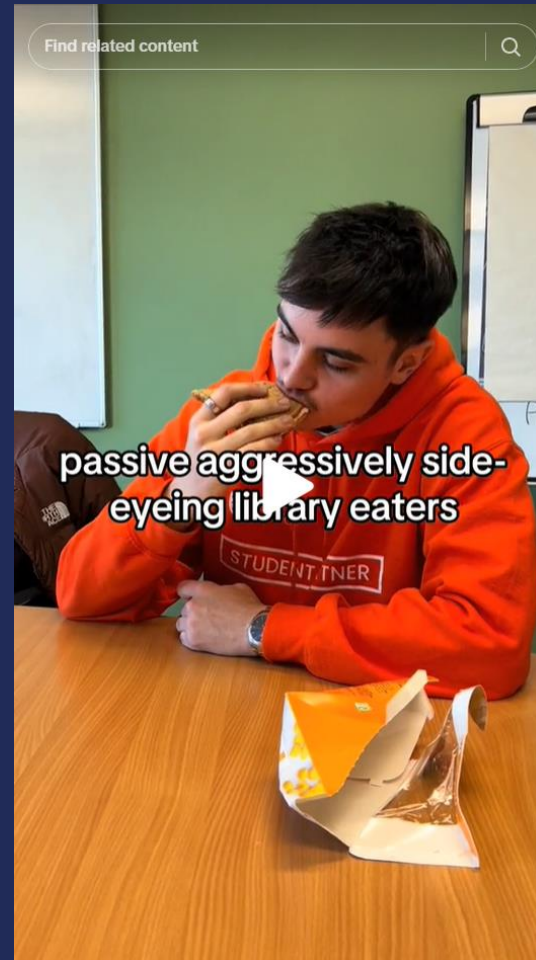


ADVANTAGES TO CUSTOMER SERVICES

Student Engagement

Greater Social Media Presence

- The Student Partners have also taken over the library's social media platforms – embedding the student voice in our online channels.
- Advertising the services available within the library.
- TikTok followers have increased from 400 to over 1,100 over a period of five months – it now boasts over 1,300,000 views and 210,000 (an engagement rate of 909.95%)
- <https://www.tiktok.com/@livunilibrary/video/7309478703615069473>
- <https://www.tiktok.com/@livunilibrary/video/7303881910344781088>



ADVANTAGES TO CUSTOMER SERVICES

Student Engagement

Not only do we outrank accounts within our own institute, but we consistently outdo other Russell Group Universities who run dedicated library accounts.

@bodleianlibraries (Oxford University) – 6.04% engagement rate.

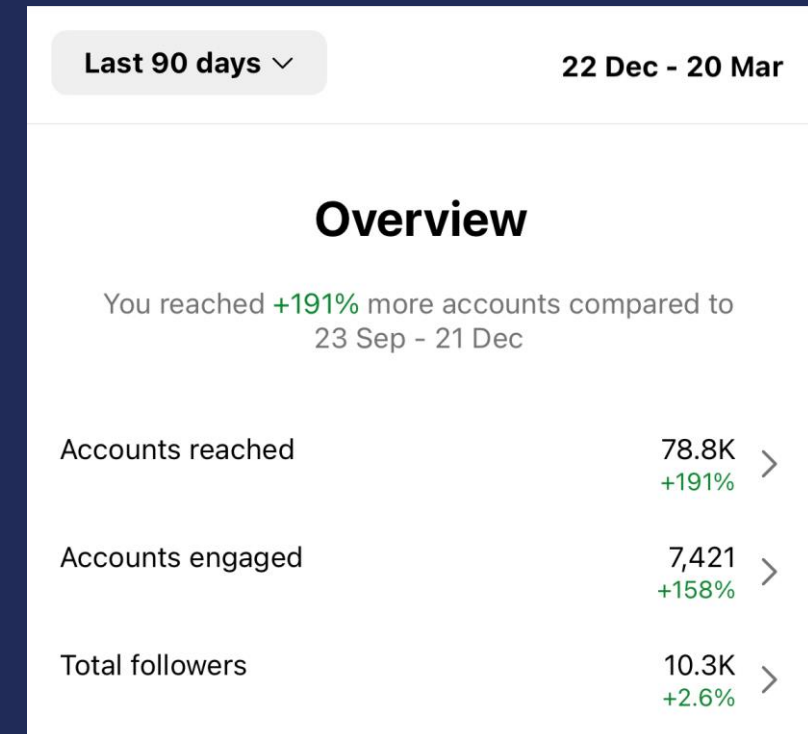
@edunilibraries (University of Edinburgh) – 9.73% engagement rate.

@lulgalleries (University of Leeds) – 36.58% engagement rate.

@uoylibrary (University of York) – 11.33% engagement rate.

@livunilibrary (University of Liverpool) – 909.95% engagement rate.

Starting this year, Student Partners have begun to create content designed for Instagram (mostly Instagram Reels), and our outreach has grown by 191% in comparison to the previous 90 days where SP content efforts were largely focussed on TikTok.



REFLECTIONS

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Find the balance between flexibility for Student Partners and service/project need
- Have project work start the week later so that everyone's first experience is of something delivered centrally
- Produce guidance manuals for Student Partner Mentors, Project Sponsors and Student Partners
- C2 shift hours increased from 2 per week to 3 due to feedback from the Student Partners
- While training is important, allowing the Student Partners to develop their skills and use their initiative is vital – shift away from student 'work experience' culture.



ANY QUESTIONS?

We are the projects
that make headlines
And people that
make history

We are the original redbrick





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