# Service with a Smile Only Gets You So Far: Staff Training for Success in the Integrated Service Environment

**M. Callow**
**D. Mulholland**

## Abstract

Training staff in the skills and knowledge needed to operate effectively in contemporary libraries is a common challenge.  Staff are expected to use an increasing range of technology to answer questions on any topic, and to maintain a customer-friendly manner throughout.  At the USQ Library this situation is further complicated by the fact that 80% of all Library staff are involved in client service roles.  Many of these staff operate across three different service points:  Information Desk, Loans Desk and a telephone service point for off-campus students.  The Library has developed a competency-based, staff-driven internal training program to equip staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver quality customer service in this integrated environment.  This paper will explore the development of the USQ Library training program from inception to delivery, and discuss issues such as: identification of key competencies, creation of training modules, gaining staff and managerial support, and timing of training to support current work demands.  The paper will also evaluate the impact of the training program on staff confidence and service delivery and highlight plans for the future.

## Introduction

The quest to improve client service at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Library began in the mid to late 1990s.  At that time, comments and results from Client Congruence surveys revealed that the service offered by the Library was not always meeting client expectations.  There were some negative comments about services and about service staff being rude and unhelpful.  The Loans Desk introduced a slogan of "Service with a Smile" to encourage staff to be more approachable, friendly and helpful.  This scheme met with instant success.  By the 2000 survey, negative comments about staff had reduced significantly.

However, the new millennium has placed new demands on Library staff.  The Library environment is now one which undergoes constant technological change, and is faced with an ever increasing amount of information available in a variety of formats (Doney, 1998 p.1). Academic libraries now play host to information commons and demanding generation Y students.  It was soon realised that "service with a smile" might get clients to the desk, but that staff needed to be better prepared to function effectively in the new environment.

Current trends in academic libraries have also placed extra demands on staff.  Staff are no longer closeted in their respective sections, but are encouraged to work across sections, and in particular, at service points.  This creates a need for staff to be multi-skilled.  One of the most effective ways to do this is to encourage staff to share their skills and knowledge with other staff through internal training programs.

This paper will explore the development of the USQ Library internal training program, focusing on:

- the background to and philosophy of training at the USQ Library
- the development of a competency based training program
- development and delivery of training modules
- evaluation of training
- issues and tips for avoiding problems
- gaining staff and managerial support and
- plans for the future.

# Main text

## Background

Changes within the USQ Library in 2001 and 2002 both gave impetus to and heightened the need for the creation of a new internal staff training program. At the end of 2001, extensions and renovations to the Library building created a new service precinct. Library service points had previously consisted of a Loans Desk, a Reference Desk and an Information Desk all housed on separate floors. Following the extension, the Loans and Information Desks were co-located on Level 3 of the Library, which also housed the Library collections, computing and photocopying facilities and AV equipment. The Reference Desk no longer existed.

In mid 2002, the Library restructured. This restructure created a Client Services division which assumed responsibility for all services to clients, including provision of a loans, information and reference service to all on and off campus clients. The Lending Services Supervisor position was retitled the On Campus Services Coordinator and assumed managerial responsibility for the Information Desk in addition to the Loans Desk and Lending Services Section. The Library restructure also contributed to a change in culture in the Library. Staff were encouraged to multi-skill and to work across various sections. The importance of the Library's clients and the need to ensure that the Library was serving their needs was no longer restricted to the traditional Lending and Reference Services sections, but permeated all areas of the Library. Currently 42 out of a total of 56 Library staff from all areas of the Library (excluding Library Administration) are rostered to serve at either the Loans Desk, the Information Desk or staff the phones in Off Campus Services.

The new service precinct assumed the nominal title of Service Central. Its primary goals were to provide a quality, seamless service to clients, with increased interaction and cooperation between staff from different sections. Following the Library restructure, a concerns exercise was run with all staff who served on either of the service desks. Some of the concerns raised included:

- Defining the role of staff on the Information Desk
- That non Reference section staff would not have the necessary skills and would be lowering the standard of service
- The need for effective and common training
- The need for service standards and a consistent approach
- That Reference staff would be lowering their skills by working on the Loans Desk.

Various working parties, including a Client Services Training Working Party were created to address some of the concerns raised.

## Library Training Working Party

The Client Services Training Working Party was concerned with identifying training needs of staff serving on the Loans and Information Desks. However, all Library staff, including those who were not serving on the Loans or Information Desk, were invited to attend the training.

Strong attendance by Library staff from all sections and feedback indicated a need to expand the role of the Client Services Training Working Party. Representatives were selected from each section of the Library and the working party was renamed the Library Training Working Party.

The role of the Library Training Working Party is to investigate the training needs of all Library staff and implement appropriate internal training programs as necessary, and to recommend staff attendance at relevant USQ based training. The initial scope of the working party was to:

- Develop job specific and generic competencies for all areas of the Library
- Identify both job specific and generic training needs
- Ensure that training meets the needs of staff by reviewing regularly and seeking staff input
- Conduct environmental scanning to ensure staff training is of a comparable standard to that offered by other university libraries
- Identify suitable training times throughout the year which support current work demands.

Recently, the scope of the Working Party has increased to include:
- Assessing training needs identified by the Library Workforce Planning process
- Reviewing Library induction processes with the view to creating standardised induction.

## Development Process

The development of training modules has been heavily modelled on the steps outlined in the course 'Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training,' namely:

- Plan Assessment
- Conduct Assessment
- Review Assessment
- Train Small Groups
- Plan a Series of Training Sessions
- Plan and Promote a Training Program
- Deliver Training Sessions
- Review Training

(Training package for assessment and workplace training: Learner's pack 1999).

When planning assessment to determine training needs, the first step was to develop Training Competencies. These training competencies were firstly developed for Loans and Information Desk work (see Appendix A). Loans and Information Desk representatives on the Training Working Party were involved in the development of these competencies, based on the desirable skills for staff working in customer service roles on the desks. In developing competencies, USQ Library staff referred to the competencies developed by other academic libraries, notably Queensland University of Technology Library.

After broad competencies had been developed, Loans and Information Desk training checklists were developed, which included detailed lists of skills needed for desk staff. The checklists were trialled with a small group of participants and feedback gained was used to revise checklists for clarity. Checklists were then administered to all Loans and Information Desk staff in late 2003. It was decided that they would be administered in the latter part of each year, to assist with the planning of training for the following year.

Checklists are being continually revised. The Library Training Working Party's latest checklist contains sections for Loans Desk skills, Information Desk skills and general Library skills. Representatives from each section of the Library are working on competencies for their area to be included in the next checklist, to ensure that it is an effective assessment instrument that can be applied to all Library staff.

Completed training checklists are returned to the Internal Training Coordinator, who then collates results to determine areas of need i.e. those areas in which staff have rated themselves as least competent. Areas of need are then compared against a list of planned training modules to determine if there is a suitable module that should be developed. If not, the matter is discussed at a Library Training Working Party meeting to determine which staff member should be approached to conduct training and the coverage of the training.

The planning and delivery of training sessions involves a wide range of Library staff from different sections of the library, employed at various levels (see Appendix B for a list of training sessions conducted). Before the Library Training Working Party schedules training for each major training period, an email is sent to all Library staff to encourage them to submit any suggestions for training to the Internal Training Co-ordinator. Suggestions for training are also gained through the feedback forms that are administered by the trainer at the end of each training session. The Library Training Working Party makes every effort to follow up any suggestions for training in a timely fashion. These suggestions, together with the training checklists completed by staff, inform decisions about training scheduling and ensure that training is relevant to staff and meets their immediate needs.

Staff of all levels and from all sections of the Library are encouraged to develop and deliver training modules. This strategy has been highly successful in that staff who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to conduct training gain confidence by facilitating sessions and affirming that their skills are indeed valued. Barriers are broken down between sections as staff are taught valuable skills by staff members from other departments of the Library.

The Library Training Working Party realises the importance of focussing on the individual as well as the needs of Library staff as a whole. Individual training checklists completed by Library staff serve as a record of their needs as evaluated on an annual basis. Many staff members take a copy of this checklist for their personal records before forwarding it to the Internal Training Coordinator, demonstrating the value of this process. It is recommended that staff members bring a copy of all internal Library training completed to their annual Performance Appraisal to aid in discussion of their training needs and where the employee has a copy of their training needs checklist, this is also discussed.

## Evaluation

The training program is evaluated regularly with required training documentation providing an excellent vehicle for this evaluation. The following documentation accompanies each training session: sign-on sheet, individual feedback forms (to be completed by each participant) and staff training report form (see Appendices C and D). Trainers keep individual feedback forms for their own records but return sign-on sheets and the staff training report form to the Internal Training Coordinator. The staff training report form is a summary report of training outcomes and is designed to assist the trainer with reflecting upon their own performance and feedback received from participants, in order to improve training delivery for subsequent sessions.

At each Library Training Working Party meeting, training sessions that have recently taken place are reviewed, with the aid of sign-on sheets and staff training report forms. In reviewing training, the Training Working Party commonly discusses the following:

- How many staff members attended the training in total?
- Did a large proportion of the target group attend the training?
- Does it seem that some training times were better than others, i.e. if given a choice, did many more participants attend at one time than an alternative time?
- Were all participants actively involved i.e. was content pitched at an appropriate level for all who attended?
- Was the method of delivery appropriate or do we need to consider different ways of presenting information?
- Were suggestions for future training received and if so, how can we arrange for this training to take place?

Statistics on attendance are regularly reported in summary form to Library Management Committee, as part of the Training Report that is submitted to each meeting of this management committee. More detailed records of attendance, including data such as names of attendees for each training session, are available in a centralised database on the Library's common drive, accessible to all Library staff.

The Library Training Working Party recently surveyed all Library staff on their experiences as participants in the Internal Library Training Program. The survey included a general section for all staff, followed by another section to be completed by staff who worked on the Loans or Information Desks (see Appendix E). Design of the survey was based upon a number of questions accompanied by a Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) and also included open-ended questions with space for participants to write their own comments.

The survey gathered information on crucial aspects of the training program, such as:

- Impact of training on staff knowledge, confidence and service delivery
- Satisfaction with training program
- Areas for improvement
- Timing of training

A high response rate was received (35 surveys returned from a total staff of 56). The survey provided valuable insight into staff perceptions of the training program (see Appendix F).

Survey data indicates that the majority of respondents believe that the training program meets their needs (see Figure 1 below).
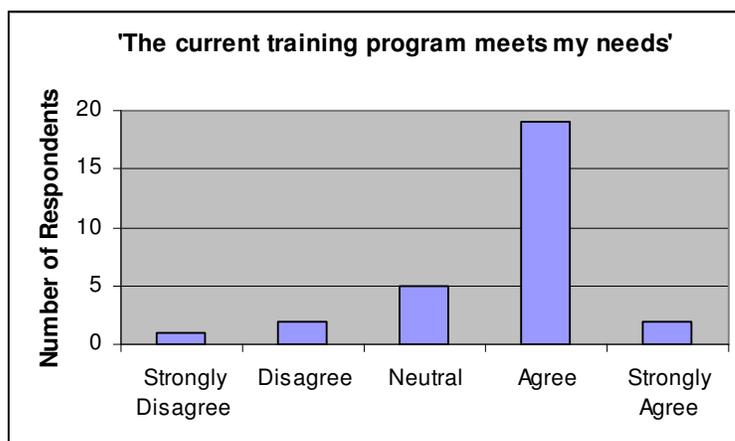


'The current training program meets my needs'

*Figure 1*: Survey responses to the statement, 'The current training program meets my needs.'

Many positive comments were received, highlighting the program's value in keeping staff up to date with latest projects being developed by Library staff and its worth in helping staff become proficient in tools needed for customer service e.g. new databases. Predictably, a number of issues with the current training program were also made apparent and these are discussed in the next section.

## Issues

The main issues identified from the staff survey and staff feedback are:

- Timing of training
- Gaining staff and managerial support
- Quality of training
- Training across multiple campuses.

*Timing of training*

Timing of training has always been an issue. All library staff are encouraged to participate in training and inevitably there are times when involvement in other activities makes it difficult for staff to attend. For example, the Resource Development team were so busy with processing new resources at one point that team members could not be released from duties to attend training. In extreme cases, training sessions have been cancelled because the target group were unable to attend, due to more urgent section priorities.

The Library Training Working Party has attempted to address timing difficulties by scheduling training between semester breaks and at other non-peak periods. This method has been successful for most sections of the Library, e.g. it is helpful for Client Services, as there are fewer queries during this time, which means fewer staff are required for the desk, which frees others to attend training. However, there are other issues associated with scheduling training in non-peak periods, such as:

- Annualised hours staff may not be working during this time
- Faculty Librarians may be busy preparing classes for the semester ahead
- Staff usually take recreation leave during non-peak periods
- Training is sometimes 'crammed' into non-peak periods, leading to comments of 'too much training.' When training has overflowed into the first couple of weeks of semester, booking of labs for training can be an issue as they are being utilised for student training.

Including part-time staff in training has at times been a challenge. It is the usual practice to schedule a morning session and an afternoon session for each training module, so that staff who are only at work in the mornings can choose a morning session and vice versa. However, difficulties still sometimes occur when part-time staff work hours outside training times. In some cases, part-time staff are highly motivated and willingly travel to work outside their normal working hours to attend classes. Other part-timers are reluctant to alter their hours to attend training. In an attempt to address this issue, training hours have been included as part of the total hours for Annualised Hours positions.

Where training is project-related, flexibility is essential. Flexibility in timing is particularly applicable to Library Systems related projects, where it is often difficult to predict when a project will be sufficiently developed that staff training is applicable. For example, training in

the Federated Search project has been loosely scheduled for 'towards the end of the year' because certain vital steps in the project must be completed before staff can be trained in the use of this new interface.

In February 2005, the Library Training Working Party experimented with consolidating training sessions into three and four hour sessions (with a short break).   This meant that instead of attending separate sessions over a few weeks, the participant attended one three or four hour session.  Feedback from participants indicated the single session approach was preferred – three or four hour sessions were too long and tedious.  It was acknowledged that while it may be easier for a trainer to run a lengthy session to avoid scheduling sessions over a few weeks, it is definitely not easier for the trainee to sit through a three or four hour session.

As part of the recent Internal Library Training Survey, staff were asked to tick which training option they preferred:

1.  Training delivered in concentrated periods for example, June to July, November to February, 2-3 training sessions per week, each of 1 or 2 hours duration.
2.  Various training sessions amalgamated into training days, and delivered at specific times of the year, example full day of training with back to back sessions.
3.  Specific training time allocated each fortnight (1 or 2 hour duration) throughout the year, with repeat sessions to enable all staff to attend.  Content of training is timetabled in relation to peak times of section.

15 out of 34 respondents (44.1%) indicated that Option 1 was preferred, 3 out of 34 (8.8%) preferred Option 2 and 16 out of 34 (47.1%) favoured Option 3 (see Figure 2).



**Timing of Training - Survey Responses**

16    15    3
☐ Option 1
☐ Option 2
☐ Option 3

*Figure 2:*  Number of survey responses to the three options regarding timing of training.

Therefore, the Library Training Working Party is considering combining Option 1 and 3 when scheduling training.  Starting in Week 5 of Semester 2 and continuing until December 2005, training will occur fortnightly (with a choice of a morning or afternoon session being run the same week).  To improve consistency of timing, trainers will be asked to choose Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon as training times, though whether this is indeed possible will depend on the trainer's other commitments.  Each session will be no longer than 2 hours as survey comments indicate that many participants prefer sessions to last for approximately one hour.  If demand for more sessions arises, more concentrated training will also be run in semester breaks.  In early 2006, the Training Working Party will review feedback about timing of training from this semester's training to determine whether this model will be utilised again for Semester 1, 2006.

*Gaining staff and managerial support*

Assuming that other commitments do not prevent them from attending, the decision of individuals to attend or not to attend has also been an issue. In the case where a session targets those staff who do not regularly perform a function and thus need practice, it is often these very staff who are reluctant to attend because 'I hardly ever have to do that.' Attendance at training is often peer-influenced – friends often sign up to attend training sessions together or conversely, don't sign up at all if one doesn't wish to attend. Participants also sometimes sign up for training but decline to attend with very short notice, which is disappointing for the trainers who have taken the time to prepare quality sessions. It is of concern that supervisors are not always aware whether staff are attending training sessions or not, and the Library Training Working Party is investigating a system where supervisors can encourage staff to attend e.g. by including a supervisor's signature line on the training booking form.

The Library Training Working Party promotes training as a necessity rather than a luxury – staff are encouraged to attend sessions in order to keep up to date with new developments and provide excellent service to clients. The recent Training Survey indicated that many staff view training as very useful, as evidenced by comments such as the following:

- My orientation and initial training has been excellent.
- It's a useful means of keeping staff up-to-date on the latest developments e.g. ePrints, eReserve. It's also a good way of educating staff on particular databases, especially the newer and more complicated ones.
- Very worthwhile. Keep up the good work.
- The Library training I really like to do is with sections I know little about and which are necessary for me to do my job (*lists sessions run by various teams in Library).*

Other comments were not as positive:

- It should not be compulsory except fire stuff.
- Ensure all training is really necessary.
- Was too intensive when staff were very busy.
- As long as it's not training for training's sake, good.

Whilst many staff realise the benefit of attending training, the mixture of comments received on the survey indicates that some staff see training as an addendum to and distraction from their work. The Library Training Working Party needs to promote the necessity of training more heavily to management and staff, to propagate a culture which views training as much a component of work as attending a meeting or doing a rostered desk shift. The working party hopes that the change in training times to regular fortnightly training sessions will encourage training to be viewed as a normal work occurrence.

Some negative staff attitude towards training was due to staff having to compulsorily attend some training which they regarded as unnecessary. In most cases there was an identified reason (such as unacceptable error rates in records in the Library Management System) that prompted trainers to make sessions compulsory. In the future varied approaches to training will be taken which take into account differing ability levels and learning styles. The Library Training Working Party will be encouraging trainers not to immediately choose a 1 hour lecture style or classroom style presentation but to look at all the possibilities for training that are available, such as self-paced tutorials, one on one or small group training. For compulsory sessions that staff may not be keen to attend, trainers will be encouraged to consider the previous experience of trainees and ensure that all participants feel they are

gaining knowledge, perhaps by streaming sessions into refresher sessions and more in-depth sessions.

Gaining managerial support is key to the success of the training program. Initial concerns from some managers over the activities of the Working Party have been overcome by ensuring constant communication. Reports are presented monthly to the Library Management Committee which outline details of recent training, planned training and progress on other activities. Key actions or issues are added to the agenda of the Library Management Committee meetings for discussion and endorsement. The Working Party also gains managerial support by aligning itself to the Library Mission Statement and Library Strategic Plan. The Library Training Working Party's main objective is to improve the service to our clients through training and developing staff. Strategic Planning exercises carried out in 2003 established that the Library's purpose is "to support a global and diverse university community by providing quality information resources and services." (USQ Library Strategic Plan 2003-2005, 2003, p.1) Staff expertise and motivation is included as a critical success factor in the Library Strategic Plan. Relevant actions from the Strategic Plan include:

- Conducting a skills audit of staff based on required competencies
- Planning and delivering training to meet identified needs
- Providing opportunities for career enhancement. (USQ Library Strategic Plan 2003-2005, 2003, p.7)

*Quality of training*

The training program has created opportunities for staff who would not otherwise be involved in training to develop and deliver training. Whilst this is a positive step in regards to staff development, it has also created issues in regards to the quality of training being delivered. Ideally, all trainers should attend some type of 'Train the Trainer' course. However, prohibitive costs make this impossible. The Library Training Working Party has encouraged the use of a standard lesson plan template by all trainers. However, for staff who have not had any experience in writing lesson plans, this only provides a little assistance. In the future the Library will include some training sessions aimed at how to develop and deliver training. Also being considered is the use of training buddies – staff experienced in training who will assist new trainers with the entire process, from writing lesson plans and handouts, to delivering training.

Another issue has been the inclusion of up-to-date material in training sessions. Where training modules have been planned in advance, they must be continually updated to ensure relevance of material. For example, the interface of a database may change, which means that any instructions or screen dumps in a training handout may need to be updated. In one case, the new version of an e-book provider service was released the week before a training session was scheduled, which meant the trainer had to rewrite all training materials.

*Training across multiple campuses*

The University of Southern Queensland has a separate campus at Hervey Bay (4 hours north of Toowoomba) and in 2006 is opening a campus at Springfield near Brisbane. These remote campuses present additional challenges for training. In some cases, teleconferencing is available, which means they can listen to presentations, although it is sometimes difficult for Wide Bay staff to follow along with presentations (e.g. PowerPoint presentation) when they are unable to see the screen. When Wide Bay staff visit Toowoomba campus for training, they are able to participate in any training sessions being conducted at the time. Unfortunately, the practice of only running one session per week, (which suits Toowoomba staff), means that Wide Bay staff may attend only one session during their week-long visit.

One solution is the use of alternative technologies.  Presently being considered is the remote assistance feature of Windows XP.  This allows the trainer to 'take over' the computer of the staff member being trained.  Thus all actions carried out by the trainer will be seen on the trainee's computer.  Also being considered is a product called Macromedia Breeze.  This allows you to add audio easily and effectively to a PowerPoint presentation and deliver it online.  Breeze reduces file sizes which in turn reduce download times.  Staff from remote campuses, as well as staff from the Toowoomba campus who have not been able to attend training sessions, will be able to view the presentation in their own time.

## Plans for the Future

Future projects of the Library Training Working Party will include developing training to meet Workforce Planning needs, enhancing induction processes and creating a Skills Register to include suitable mentors in various areas.  The Working Party also intends to revise its competency checklists to include competencies from all areas of the Library.   Interviews with training participants are planned, in order to plan training to suit individuals.  Other areas to work on include developing a variety of approaches to training, improving timing of training and involving all Library staff in training.

The Library Training Working Party will continue its work on planning training to link in with the Library's Workforce Planning.  The Working Party has developed a table of planned training, based on the Skills/Attitudes identified as being needed by Library Staff over the next three years. (These attributes were identified during workshops involving Library management and other interested staff). This table includes such information as Skills/Attitudes, Training Actions and the staff member/s responsible for training.  Where external training has been listed as the appropriate training action, these training areas will be referred back to Library Management Committee, as the Library Training Working Party is only responsible for internal training.  For internal training, the Internal Library Training Co-ordinator will contact the trainer/s nominated for each skill area to ascertain the training methods they wish to use and a timeline for training.  It is expected that some training sessions based on Workforce Planning needs  will be incorporated into the Training Program for late this year (depending on workload of trainers) and certainly that these sessions will be an integral part of the training program in 2006.

The enhancement of induction processes for new staff will also be a major project for the Library Training Working Party.  The Library Training Working Party interviewed new staff members last year to ascertain areas where induction could be improved.  The consensus was that a more detailed induction, spread over the first 6 months of a person's employment, was needed.  The importance of mentoring was also highlighted and it is expected that the Library Training Working Party's planned register of skills and mentors will greatly assist new employees.  Induction priorities need to be established, as does a standardised induction process which can be used by all sections of the Library. As a result of comments from new employees, Loans and Information Desk checklists have been developed to ensure that induction covers all necessary processes.  These checklists have been trialled with new employees with positive results.  The Library Training Working Party will continue to work to further enhance induction processes.

Supporting individual career development is very important to the Library Training Working Party.  An individual may have urgent training needs that cannot be met by a group training session for a number of reasons, e.g. they need specialised attention that cannot be provided in a group setting or the training is very specific and of little interest to others.  To cater for individual needs, the Library Training Working Party will develop a Skills Register, which will contain the names of appropriate mentors in the Library who are willing to tutor others in their areas of expertise.  The Skills Register will assist in the achievement of

Workforce Planning goals, as mentoring or one-on-one coaching is the preferred training method for development of many Skills/Attitudes in Library staff. Section representatives on the Library Training Working Party will be involved in nominating mentors for various skills. The creation of the Skills Register will highlight the skills of staff at all levels in a positive manner and assist information sharing across the organisation. It will be complementary to the existing training program and will also inform the Library Training Working Party of possible trainers for group training sessions where there may be a number of staff who wish to improve their skills in a particular area.

Another project will be the revision of Training Competencies to include competencies from all sections of the Library. Section representatives are working on developing up-to-date and detailed competencies for their sections. Competencies for all sections will then be used to develop an updated Competency Checklist or Individual Training Plan, to be administered to all Library staff later in the year to determine their training needs. In the past, this checklist has only been administered to desk staff but with the inclusion of competencies from other sections, it will be rolled out to all Library staff. Staff will be required to complete only those sections which apply to their work, e.g. Loans Desk, and will rate their skill level in each area as well as the priority they place on training for the particular skill. The Library Training Working Party will utilise data from completed checklists to plan future training, based directly on the needs of staff.

Individualising training to ensure that all staff benefit from the program will also be a major focus. Comments from the recent Training Survey indicated that some staff are still unsure of the applicability of training to their own needs. Therefore, interviews with individual staff are planned to ascertain their needs and provide more of an individual focus. Of particular interest will be interviews with staff who rarely attend training, to find out why this is the case and how the Library Training Working Party can better meet their needs. Data from interviews will supplement information gathered from training checklists and will be utilised in the scheduling of future training.

## Conclusion

The development of the training program has been a challenging but extremely rewarding experience. Members of the Training Working Party, and in particular the Internal Library Training Coordinator, have worked hard to commit adequate time to developing the program while balancing it with their other duties. A recent review of the initial training modules identified in the early stages has shown that the vast majority have been developed and delivered, thus indicating that the aims of the program are being achieved.

When committing to a training program of this nature, it must be realised that it is a constantly evolving project. It is essential to continue to develop the program whilst also reviewing completed training modules to ensure currency and continued applicability. It is also important to communicate with training participants, respond appropriately to feedback and to involve staff in the process wherever possible.

## References

Doney, Elizabeth 1998, 'Developing opinions: the attitude of ILS staff to continuing professional development', *Library Management*, vol.19, no. 8, viewed 27 July 2005, Emerald Fulltext database, ISSN 0143-5124.

*Training package for assessment and workplace training: Learner's pack* 1999, Australian National Training Authority, Melbourne.

USQ Library 2003, *USQ Library Strategic Plan 2003 – 2005*, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba.

# Appendix A

## Information Desk Competencies

| Competency | Knowledge/skills/attitude required | Training | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Information Desk staff will be able to conduct an effective reference interaction. | 1.1. Staff will provide a quality service and demonstrate efficient, courteous and effective communication skills. | • Client service<br>• Communication skills<br>• Cross-cultural awareness<br>• Negotiation | • Customer Service training – HR<br>• Communication Skills training - HR<br>• Cross-cultural training - Student Services |
| | 1.2. Staff will possess Reference interview/neutral questioning skills. | • Neutral questioning<br>• Reference interview<br>• Referral guidelines | • In house training<br>• Neutral Questioning |
| | 1.3. Staff will develop search strategy techniques. | • Search tools & strategy training. | • In house training |
| | 1.4 Staff will have a knowledge of the opening & closing procedures. | • Opening & closing procedures | • In house training |
| 2. Information Desk staff will be able to help clients use the Library's resources and services | 2.1. Staff will have a knowledge of the Electronic resources offered and used by the library. | • Library website<br>• Library catalogue<br>• Databases<br>• Internet resources<br>• Virtua staff client | • In house training |
| | 2.2 Staff will be aware of the services offered by the Library:<br>• Document delivery<br>• Off Campus Services<br>• Library Classes<br>• Faculty Librarians<br>• Staff photocopy service | • Off-Campus/Document Delivery Orientation<br>• Library Web site | • In house training |
| | 2.3. Staff will have a knowledge of library policies & procedures | • Section orientations | • Library website<br>• Procedure Manuals |

| Competency | Knowledge/skills/attitude required | raining | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2.4. Staff will have a thorough knowledge of facilities and collections of the Library | • Location of major collections and facilities<br>• Collection scope & strengths<br>• Sub Collections e.g. Junior, Serials, EML<br>• Dewey Decimal System | • In house training |
| 3. Information Desk staff will be able to refer clients to appropriate resources or services elsewhere at USQ or externally. | 3.1. Staff will have a knowledge of the USQ environment, processes, functions and contacts:<br>• USQ's e-systems:<br>• USQ policies<br>• ITS<br>• Student Guild<br>• Student Services<br>• Student Administration<br>• Finance<br>• Media Services Unit<br>• DEC - Outreach | • Awareness of services available<br>• USQ web pages orientation<br>• *USQ*Connect Orientation<br>• Privacy<br>• Copyright<br>• DEC Orientation | • In house training<br>• USQ web pages<br>• DEC |
| | 3.2 Knowledge of relevant non-USQ services and resources | • Web page familiarisation<br>• Other libraries<br>• Government departments | • Procedures Manual<br>• In house training<br>• Library Web site |
| 4. Information Desk staff will be able to operate Information Desk systems and equipment | 4.1 Desk layout and procedures<br>• Desk PCs and printer<br>• Diary<br>• Statistics sheets<br>• Communication folder<br>• Equipment folders<br>• Class bookings<br>• Desk and teamwork etiquette | • Information Desk orientation | • Procedures Manual<br>• Equipment Troubleshooting Guide |

| Competency | Knowledge/skills/attitude required | raining | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Information desk staff will be able to operate all equipment and deal effectively with equipment breakdowns and problems. | 5.1. Staff will be familiar with the following equipment. <br>• Photocopiers <br>• Value adding machines <br>• Microfilm/fiche readers <br>• ITS printer <br>• ITS network & PCs <br>• AV Equipment <br>• Thin clients & printer <br>• Library networked database PCs <br>• Stand alone and multimedia machines <br>• Thin Client & printer | • Opening & closing Procedures <br>• Information Desk orientation <br>• Level 3 Orientation | • In house training <br>• Equipment Troubleshooting Guide |
| | 5.2 Staff will be able to troubleshoot simple problems and know reporting procedures for breakdowns for the above equipment | • Reporting faults <br>• After hours procedures | • In house training <br>• Equipment Troubleshooting Guide <br>• Student Guild <br>• ITS |
| 6. Information desk staff will be able to deal effectively with emergency situations and health and safety issues | 6.1 Staff will be familiar with emergency and evacuation procedures | • Emergency procedures <br>• Location of fire alarms and extinguishers, torches <br>• Fire Extinguisher Training <br>• Fault reporting | • Emergency procedures documentation <br>• USQ safe <br>• Procedure Manual |
| | 6.2 Staff will be familiar with USQ health & safety policies & procedures as they apply to the Library | • USQ health & safety requirements | • USQ Safe <br>• In house training |
| | 6.3 Staff will be familiar with after hours emergency procedures, and contacts | • Emergency numbers <br>• After hours contact & procedures | • In house training |

# Appendix B

**Training Sessions Conducted**

NB:  Although training sessions organised by the Library Training Working Party are open to all Library staff, there is usually a target group, who are strongly encouraged to attend.

| Learning Area | Training Session | Target Group |
|---|---|---|
| General | Cross-Cultural Training | All library staff |
| General | DocEx/ILL | Loans and Information desk staff, Off-Campus Services staff |
| General | Equipment Training-Information Technology Services (ITS) Equipment | Loans and Information desk staff |
| General | Equipment Training – Student Guild Equipment | Loans and Information desk staff |
| General | Evacuation/Emergency Procedures | All library staff |
| General | Resource Development Orientation | All library staff (except Resource Development staff) |
| General | Service Standards | Library staff who work on service points |
| General | USQ Environment | All library staff |
| General | Workplace Health and Safety | All library staff |
| Information Desk | AusStats | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Australian Standards Online/Compendex | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | eBrary | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | EbscoHOST | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Emerald | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | IEEExplore Interface and ASME Journals | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | IEEExplore/Wiley | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Factiva | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Library Website and Catalogue and Internet Resources | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Neutral Questioning | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Opening and Closing Procedures | Loans desk staff and Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | OVID | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Refresher Training for Subject Searches/Phone Rosters | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Search Tools and Search Strategy | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Service Central for Loans | Loans desk staff who do not also work on Information Desk |
| Information Desk | Subject Specific Resources (Business) | Information desk staff |

| Learning Area | Training Session | Target Group |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Information Desk | Subject Specific Resources (Education) | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Subject Specific Resources (Sciences) | Information desk staff |
| Information Desk | Training Session for InfoDesk staff on OffCamp Phone Roster | Information Desk staff |
| Information Desk | Web Gateway for Loans Desk Staff | Loans Desk staff who do not also work on Information Desk |
| Information Technology | Emerging Technologies Forum for Library Staff | All library staff |
| Information Technology | ePrints | All library staff |
| Information Technology | EzProxy Technical Information Sharing Session | All library staff |
| Information Technology | Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Blogs, Wikis and RSS | All library staff |
| Information Technology | Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Google | All library staff |
| Information Technology | File Management | All library staff (except IT professionals e.g. library systems staff) |
| Information Technology | Information Technology Services (ITS) Student Network Training | Library staff who work on service points |
| Information Technology | Library Systems/Databases Update | All library staff |
| Information Technology | Network Nous: Understanding Library Network Issues | All library staff |
| Information Technology | Network Nous Refresher | All library staff |
| Information Technology | Network Nous II – The Sequel | All library staff |
| Information Technology | USQConnect training | Library staff who work on service points |
| Loans Desk | Challenging Situations at the Loans Desk | Loans desk staff and info desk staff who assist on Loans Desk |
| Loans Desk | Patron Registration | Loans Desk staff and Info Desk staff who assist on Loans Desk |
| Loans Desk | Peoplesoft – Web and Client | Information desk staff who do not also work on Loans Desk |
| Loans Desk | Service Central for Info | Information desk staff who do not also work on Loans Desk |
| Loans Desk | Virtua Staff Client for Information Desk | Information desk staff who do not also work on Loans Desk |

**Appendix C**
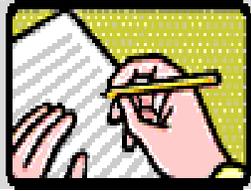
# USQ Library Internal Training
# Feedback Form

Class:

Trainer:                                    Date:

Below are 9 questions that refer to 'class content', 'trainer performance' and 'information tools'. Please tick which box you feel best describes your individual class experience.

| **Questions 1-6** | **Excellent** | **Good** | **Average** | **Poor** | **Bad** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How would you rate this session? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. The content presented was? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. The visual learning tools were? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. The Trainer was? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. The class handout was? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| **Questions 6-7** | **Yes** | **No** | **Not Sure** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Would you recommend attending a similar session to other staff? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. Did this session meet your learning needs? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

8. Suggestions for improving this training session:

....................................................................................................................................

....................................................................................................................................

9. Suggestions for future training topics:

....................................................................................................................................

....................................................................................................................................

**Please return this form to your trainer at the end of the session.**
**Thank you for your participation.**

**Appendix D**

## USQ Library Internal Training
## Staff Training Report

Trainer/s:..........................................................................................................................

Topic:...............................................................................................................................

Date/s:............................................................ Time/s:.............................................

Venue:..............................................................................................................................

Number of Participants:....................................................................................................

Class Composition (eg background of attendees):...............................................................

.........................................................................................................................................

Brief Self-Evaluation:.......................................................................................................

.........................................................................................................................................

Average rating received from attendees:............................................................................

Feedback received: *(Please summarise feedback given orally/received on feedback forms):*

.........................................................................................................................................

.........................................................................................................................................

Response to feedback: *(Please indicate how you have responded to feedback given about your class, eg by email to the group or personally to attendees):*

.........................................................................................................................................

.........................................................................................................................................

Suggestions for future training topics: ...............................................................................

.........................................................................................................................................

Any other suggestions for the Training Working Party: .......................................................

.........................................................................................................................................

**Appendix E**

# Internal Library Training Survey

The Library Training Working Party is currently reviewing the internal Library training process as coordinated by the Library Training Working Party and specifically by Debbie Mulholland.  To assist us, we would like you to take a few minutes to complete the following survey.  If you have any suggestions for improvements or changes to the process, please comment in the spaces provided.  This document is anonymous, so feel free to be honest.

## Section A
*All staff please complete*

**Please consider the following statements in relation to internal Library training which you have attended over the previous 18 months.**

1    My knowledge of the roles of other staff has increased.

   Strongly Disagree          Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

2    Attending training improves my knowledge of Library operations.

   Strongly Disagree          Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

3    Attending training helps me keep up to date with changes.

   Strongly Disagree          Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

4    My skills in the use of Virtua have improved.

   Strongly Disagree          Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

5    My skills in the use of Online resources (for example Databases, e-books) have improved.

   Strongly Disagree          Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

6    The current training program meets my needs.

   Strongly Disagree          Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

**Comments in relation to the current Library training program:**

.............................................................................................................................................

.............................................................................................................................................

.............................................................................................................................................

**Suggestions for improvement to the Library training program:**

...................................................................................................................................

...................................................................................................................................

...................................................................................................................................

**Timing of training:**
Below are options for the timing of training delivery.  Please tick your preferred option:

☐   Training delivered in concentrated periods for example, June to July, November to February, 2-3 training sessions per week, each of 1 or 2 hours duration.

☐   Various training sessions amalgamated into training days, and delivered at specific times of the year, example full day of training with back to back sessions.

☐   Specific training time allocated each fortnight (1 or 2 hour duration) throughout the year, with repeat sessions at different times to enable all staff to attend.  Content of Training is timetabled in relation to peak times of sections.

## Section B
*Please complete this section only if you work on the Loans or Information Desk.*

**Please consider the following statements in relation to internal Library training which you have attended over the previous 18 months.**

1.   My skills for serving on desk have improved.

   Strongly Disagree         Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

2.   My skills for troubleshooting problems on desk have improved.

   Strongly Disagree         Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

3.   I am more confident serving on desk.

   Strongly Disagree         Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

4.   I am more confident assisting on the other desk.

   Strongly Disagree         Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

5.   I am more confident answering questions which relate to the other desk.

   Strongly Disagree         Disagree          Neutral          Agree          Strongly Agree

## Other Comments

...................................................................................................................................

...................................................................................................................................

# Appendix F

## Training Survey Data

**Total number of respondents:** 35 out of a total of 56 staff.

## Section A

In Section A, staff were asked to consider the following statements in relation to internal Library training which they had attended over the previous 18 months:

Statement 1:  My knowledge of the roles of other staff has increased.
Statement 2:  Attending training improves my knowledge of Library operations.
Statement 3:  Attending training helps me keep up to date with changes.
Statement 4:  My skills in the use of Virtua have improved.  *(Virtua being the Library's computerised library management system).*
Statement 5:  My skills in the use of Online resources (for example Databases, e-books) have improved.
Statement 6:  The current training program meets my needs.

***Results:***

|  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statement 1** |  | 3 | 4 | 23 | 3 |
| **Statement 2** |  | 1 | 2 | 18 | 13 |
| **Statement 3** |  | 1 | 2 | 21 | 9 |
| **Statement 4** | 1 | 1 | 11 | 14 | 3 |
| **Statement 5** |  | 4 | 7 | 16 | 5 |
| **Statement 6** | 1 | 2 | 5 | 19 | 2 |

## Comments in relation to the current Library Training Program:

The survey provided an opportunity for respondents to comment on the current library training program. The common themes of these comments were:

- Training is very worthwhile.  Sessions meet expectations.
- Training about new developments is useful in keeping up-to-date
- Consolidated blocks of sessions are too intensive and provide too much information to absorb at one time
- Sometimes it is difficult to attend or run sessions due to other commitments
- Don't always get to practice content learnt, so it's useful to have refresher courses.
- Some sessions too lengthy
- At times, there is too much content and trainers rush through it
- Some training venues are inappropriate and do not reflect the multi-campus nature of the library
- Some training sessions should  be compulsory
- Staff do not appreciate having to attend compulsory sessions when they feel it is not necessary
- Training advertisements should indicate the target group
- Content of training should meet needs of participants
- The purpose of training must be made clear to participants

- More training desired in Online resources
- Training should be professional with trainers prepared, equipment working etc.
- Training handouts are useful as a reference

**Suggestions for improvement to the Library Training Program**

Participants gave suggestions for improvement to the Training Programs. Comments were based around the following themes:

- Make some sessions compulsory to ensure target staff attend
- Ensure all training is necessary
- Short sessions no longer than an hour are favoured
- Space training out so it is less concentrated
- Reduce number of training sessions at busy time of year
- Refreshments are appreciated at training
- External training is still needed in some areas where internal staff don't have the required expertise to act as trainers

**Timing of Training**

Participants were presented with the following three options and asked to tick their preferred option:

- Training Option 1:  Training delivered in concentrated periods, for example, June to July, November to February, 2-3 training sessions per week, each of 1 or 2 hours duration.
- Training Option 2:  Various training sessions amalgamated into training days, and delivered at specific times of the year, example full day of training with back to back sessions.
- Training Option 3:  Specific training time allocated each fortnight (1 or 2 hour duration) throughout the year, with repeat sessions at different times to enable all staff to attend. Content of Training is timetabled in relation to peak times of sections.

*Results*:

|  | Number of people who ticked option |
| --- | --- |
| **Statement 1** | 15 |
| **Statement 2** | 3 |
| **Statement 3** | 16 |

## Section B

Respondents were asked to only complete this section if they work on the Loans or Information Desk.

It was requested that staff consider the following statements in relation to internal Library training which they had attended over the previous 18 months:

Statement 1:  My skills for serving on desk have improved.
Statement 2:  My skills for troubleshooting problems on desk have improved.
Statement 3:  I am more confident serving on desk.
Statement 4:  I am more confident assisting on the other desk.
Statement 5:  I am more confident answering questions which relate to the other desk.

***Results:***

|  | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statement 1** | 1 | 1 | 6 | 17 | |
| **Statement 2** | | 1 | 7 | 17 | |
| **Statement 3** | | 2 | 9 | 14 | |
| **Statement 4** | 2 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 1 |
| **Statement 5** | 1 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 1 |

**Other Comments:**

In this free response section, staff could choose to comment on any other aspects of the training program that were of interest or concern. The general themes were:

- Training is vital for professional development
- In-house training has been first class
- Training helps staff meet service requirements of the Library Mission Statement on Service
- Some sessions lend themselves to concentrated periods but there is a need to conduct sessions throughout the year
- Fire evacuation training should be compulsory
- Can now provide backup assistance on other desk
- Would need more training in environment of the other desk before feeling comfortable in answering enquiries
- Useful to do training with sections a staff member knows little about