



How to run a successful intern program: a case study from UNSW Library

Shaun O'Dwyer, Manager, Client Services & Document Services

Never Stand Still

UNSW Library





UNSW
AUSTRALIA

Why an intern program?

- Changing demand
- Review of services
- Creating a client focussed, engaged team
- Need for consistent services across 3 locations and online

What's out there?

- International intern programs
- Often tied to job experience during studies
- Unpaid positions
- Feeling of US and THEM
- Not many Australian examples



Basics of the program

- 4 x 12 month fixed term contract positions
- UNSW employees
- Full time, fully paid positions
- Candidates to have just completed relevant study or be in final year of study
- No differentiation between university and TAFE courses
- Each intern works in all three locations
- Each intern participates fully in all work of the unit
- Interns work Saturday shifts as normal part of duties
- Interns work Sunday shifts



Recruitment and costs

- UNSW Library pays set fee for recruitment of interns every calendar year
- Recruitment agency short-lists applicants
- Advertised on recruitment agency job list
- No limit to number of interns recruited each year
- Short-listed interns interviewed by Manager, CSU & CS Team Leader



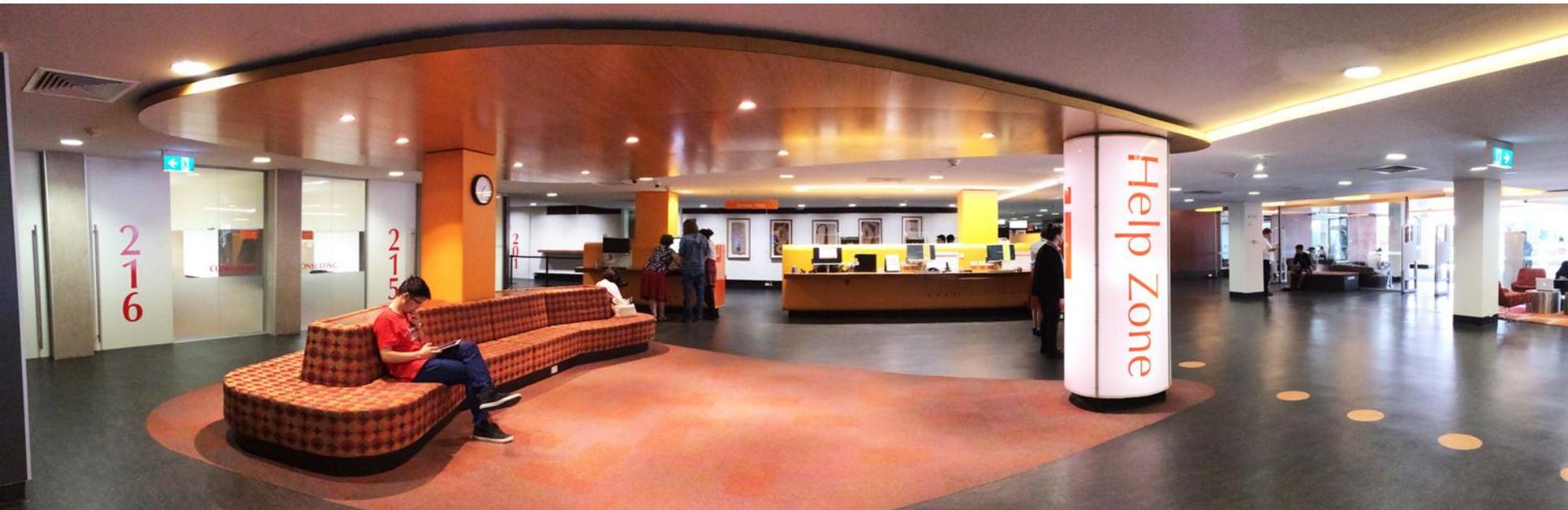
Induction and training

- Exactly the same induction and training processes as for permanent staff
- Part of the team
- Formal training
- ON THE JOB training
- Recruitment issues - time of year



Outcomes

- 23 interns have participated in the program
- Feedback from interns and permanent staff extremely positive
- 14 interns have stayed on at UNSW Library in further roles
 - 12 permanent positions: 3 (Academic Services), 2 (Document Services), 7 (Client Services)
 - 2 contract positions in other units



New developments

- Another intern position created
- All interns have 10 week placement in another UNSW Library unit included in internship:
 - Academic Services
 - Collection Development
 - Document Services
 - Electronic Resources
 - Physical Resources
- Mentoring Program



“I’ve never been able to picture myself with a career. I’ve always had jobs, not thinking I had any useful skills other than being a people person. I think I now have a career, and though the path I’d like to take may change, it’s thanks to the internship program that I am where I am. Library jobs for rank beginners are very hard to come by which makes the internships so important. That’s five people who are super bright and keen and have the potential to be great in various aspects of libraries but may have only worked in a café or bowling club or car rental joint, who are given a chance to learn in one of the best academic libraries in the country. And that is pretty cool.”

