



A day in the life of a Health Services Librarian

This article describes an average workday for the Mackay Health Service District Library Manager. The Queensland Health Mackay Health Service District Library is a small special health library providing information services to over 1300 staff based in an area of 90 000 sq km through 13 sites. The library currently employs a professional librarian (Library Manager) and a library assistant/web publisher. The role requires a broad range of skills in addition to subject specialisation. Within a contemporary health service, the requirement for integrated and cross-discipline evidence-based practice and ongoing professional development and support makes the position vital.

0630: Arrive at work, check the library for tidiness, check and refill the printer/copier, log in to my own computer, check and action the generic library and my email accounts. There are already people in working on the client access computers and I often get requests for assistance on my arrival. If there are no immediate requests, I have a cup of tea at my desk as I peruse my diary for meetings and scheduled work requirements, prioritise the day's work, and then get into it.

0745: Ros Pearce (our Library Assistant) arrives – quick hello and catch up – Ros opens the front door and checks in any returned items and deals with interlibrary loan/document delivery requests. She is the first port of call for library clients.

0800: We are officially open for business. Our hours are 0800 - 1600 Monday to Friday, but we offer 24-hour access to District staff via an electronic pass card.

0830: Undertake a client literature search on the current best practice for timing of intravenous antibiotics in surgery. Develop a search strategy and apply it to several databases. Collate resulting citations and abstracts.

0935: Client pops head in my office to ask how to access information on child welfare. Show her then return to the lit search.

0950: Email lit search to the requester with instructions on how to access the supplied citations. Check emails again – send out Table of Contents and SDI services to clients.

1000: Spend 20 minutes on some professional reading or online study and some background reading for my next meeting. Grab a cup of tea at my desk as I do.

1030: Meeting of the Education and Research Council (the overarching body providing Education Services to the District.)

1200: A busy period in the library as clients come in during their breaks to use the computers, seek advice with their study or research requirements, read the paper, and have their lunch.

1330: Have a break for lunch. Catch up with Ros and check on her morning. A quick check of the library as I move around to ensure everything is ok.

1400: Present a training session on finding information and evidence-based practice to post-graduate nurses, tailoring the session to their specific learning requirements.

1445: Select resources and submit order to our vendor. Check incoming resources and catalogue items. Append items to new resources list for sending out at the end of the month to clients. A quick check of the library as I move around to ensure everything is ok.

1515: Work on Statewide Queensland Health Libraries Network project. Contact colleagues to discuss issues and identify solutions.

1545: Pack up in my work area. Go and see Ros and see if there is anything she needs a hand with or wants me to know about; deal with any issues and then say goodbye. A final check of the library as I leave.

1600: Off to my car and drive home; another interesting and varied day over!

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