LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT / BIBLIOTHÈQUE DU PARLEMENT

BUILDING A COMPETENCY-BASED NEW EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Melissa Fraser-Arnott & Maureen Martyn

INTRODUCTION

New employee development is an essential. Its purposes are competency development for role success and socialization into the organizational culture

The Research Librarian Development Program at Canada's Library of Parliament is a year-long development program which was initiated in the library in 2012 in order to offer consistent training and development opportunities among all new research librarians.

The program was redesigned in 2017-2018 to shift its focus from tasks toward competencies following competency-based management model. The program redesign included the creation of a new competency-based development grid, refinement of shared training plans, and the establishment of program milestones. The redesigned program has been running for over a year.

LIBRARIAN COMPETENCIES

Adaptability, Client Focus, Exemplifying Integrity, Organizational Awareness, Data/Information Retrieval and Analysis, Quality Focus, Communication, Teamwork, Analytical Thinking

LIBRARIAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PERIOD	ACTIVITIES
Months 1-3	• Introduction to the development program • Mentoring from a Senior Research Librarian (guidance on developing research strategies, interacting with clients, and writing reference responses) • Completion of most of the training plan (organizational structure, information resources, policies, and procedures) • Completion of sample and simple reference questions • Job shadowing for telephone and desk reference duty shifts • 3-month development program evaluation
Months 4-6	• Ongoing mentoring from the Senior Research Librarian • Completion of the training plan • Opportunities to work on a wider range of reference questions • Participation in duty shifts on the phone and at branch reference desks • Tailored training opportunities (based on 3-month feedback) • 6-month development program evaluation
Months 7-9	• Ongoing mentoring from the Senior Research Librarian • Working on a variety of reference questions, including urgent requests • Regular participation in duty shifts • Participation in special assignments or projects • Tailored training opportunities (based on 6-month feedback) • Possible opportunities to peer-review others' work • 9-month development program evaluation
Months 10-12	• Ongoing mentoring from the Senior Research Librarian • Full participation in duty shifts • Assignment of a full range of reference questions, including urgent requests • Opportunities to review peer's written • Final program evaluation

LESSONS LEARNED

Develop a consistent approach: The program is designed to ensure that all new Research Librarians to have the same orientation activities, the same opportunities for training and mentoring, and the same criteria for evaluation and promotion.

Think about competencies instead of tasks: Task-level specificity made it more difficult to fairly evaluate employees, because it only looked for displays of desired behaviours in certain specific contexts.

Be clear about expectations: We developed the milestone document to help new employees to be ready for the leaps in workload and responsibilities that occur at different points in their training year.

Mentoring matters: The heart of program is the mentorship relationship between the new employee and the Senior Research Librarian. They constantly provide feedback and help the new employees to navigate the Library's information resources and culture.

Be flexible: Build enough flexibility into your program to adjust to your new employees' individual needs.