

George Mason University
University Information

Switchboard/Kiosk/Information Center
Operations and Regulations Manual

July 1, 2008

Purpose of Job

Switchboard/Kiosk student assistants at George Mason University are responsible for timely and accurate dissemination of information via telephone and in person. Student assistants are front-line representative of George Mason University and should be professional and proficient in the process of distributing information, be helpful and courteous in every way to the campus community and visitors.

Job Description

- Work under the direct supervision of the Switchboard Manager and the overall supervision of the Information Services Director
- Provide information via telephone and in person to persons both internal and external George Mason community.

Training Period

There is a two-week training period beginning the first day the Student Assistant works. During this period the Assistant will be required to learn:

- X Basic information about Mason (as per Mason 101 class)
- X Names of all buildings, their location, and what is in them
 - Understand and Operate a Meridian Console
 - Transfer a call
 - Place a caller on hold
 - Conference call
- X Learn how to receive calls on the TTY machine
 - Codes for TTY calls
 - Learn how to use the AXIS database on the computer
 - Locate and learn how to get information from:
 - Class Schedules
 - Maps
 - Scheduler Plus printouts
 - Reference notebook
 - WEB Pages
 - Other resource materials
- X Learn opening and closing procedures
 - Obtain omnilock code and learn how to use lock to open office door and door to SUB I
 - Open all computers
 - Fill out timesheet daily
 - Complete statistical log

After the two-week training period, the Assistant is given a two-week probation to prove themselves. **It is your responsibility to continue to study the resource materials after your initial training period in order to become more familiar with information about George Mason University.**

Job Requirements

- All student assistants will have completed at least one semester of course work at GMU.
- Student assistants must possess a high level of customer service and communication skills.
- X Student assistant must be willing to learn the materials required to do the job

Scheduling

Since your primary purpose in coming to Mason was to attend classes, your schedule will be made around your class schedule. A work schedule starts on the first day of class, and goes to the start of the university holidays or until the next semester begins. If university offices are open, we are OPEN even if there are no classes in session. A work schedule is made at the beginning of every semester, and sometimes a special schedule is made for holiday periods. You will be given the opportunity to submit a list showing your class schedule and the hours you could work. Do not submit times that are the beginning or ending time of a class or other obligation. You **will not** be allowed to arrive late. Tardiness will not be tolerated; frequent tardy arrival (more than 2 times in a semester) may result in

disciplinary action or dismissal. You are expected to work during times when the university is open but classes are not in session. Management reserves the right to reschedule staff during the semester to meet the needs of the operation.

X If you have to get to class, you may leave not more than 10 minutes prior to your shift ending. Otherwise, you must stay until your replacement arrives.

Substitutions

YOUR SHIFT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. You will be given a list of other employees in our department. If you need a substitute, it is your responsibility to contact your co-workers and arrange for a sub. When you have found a sub, you must put this information on the substitute clipboard in the outer office. Bring it to the manager who will initial your substitution. At this point the substitute is now responsible for those hours. Do not schedule appointments (advisor, doctor, counselor, professor, car repair) during your assigned work hours unless you previously have arranged for someone to sub for you. In emergency situations such as sudden illness or a family emergency, contact your supervisor at the office or at home. Students not regularly scheduled on weekends or other times should expect to serve as a substitute whenever possible. This is an EXPECTATION!

Attendance

You are expected to work the hours you are scheduled. Punctuality is essential, since not only the office, but also your fellow workers and our patrons depend on you to be at work on time. Unapproved absences, late arrivals, early departures, and no-shows may cost you your job. These things indicate **irresponsibility** on your part.

Some definitions of terms you may hear:

Come to work on time. It is suggested that you arrive ten minutes before your scheduled shift. This insures a smooth transition.

Definition of lateness. "Lateness" is arriving after the time you are scheduled to work. If your shift begins at 10:00am and you arrive at 10:01am, then you are late. You would need to arrive at your assigned workplace before or exactly at 10am to be considered "on time". It is preferred that you arrive at work at least 5 minutes before your shift begins to maintain a smooth transition--and the other person may need to get to class!

Sick Leave

If you are sick, it is your responsibility to find a substitute for work. Failure to find a sub and not showing up for work will count as an unexcused absence unless you have a doctor's note. Student Health and other health care professionals will give you a note if you tell them you need it for your employer. The manager will decide if the absence is excused.

If you are suddenly ill, or have an emergency, you must notify the manager at the office or at home to let him/her know if you have been able to find a sub. Do not leave a message on the office phone. You have been given a home and office number for the manager and director. Speak with one of them directly. **An emergency is not oversleeping, wanting a day off, having to study for a test, or forgetting when you are scheduled.**

Breaks

Since you work independently at various locations, personal breaks with friends or running errands around campus are not permitted while on duty. Emergency bathroom breaks are allowed. If you are in the Finley kiosk and need an emergency break, notify the Manager or person in charge so someone can be sent to cover the area.

Office Decorum

Misuse of office time: When you are at work, you are expected to work. We may have other tasks to accomplish and you are expected to work on these. Work time can also be used to learn more about Mason by studying the Mason info in the reference book, or by investigating Mason web sites. Your first priority is your customer or office work assigned, and not your homework, paper, e-mail or web site. It is important for you to realize that certain activities should occur during your personal time and not your work time.

Phone use should be for business. Frequent or lengthy personal calls, friends or relatives calling you at work, etc. is not acceptable. On occasion, you might need to make a personal call, but it must be kept to less than 10 minutes. Long distance calls may not be made from a university phone unless you use your own long distance calling card. Telephone usage is monitored by the manager who reviews a monthly report showing all external calls--day, time,

number called, length of call and charge to our account. We are charged 11 cents for each call made off campus and more for calls to our extended dialing area. You may **NOT** give out the number to the kiosk and have your friends call you there.

Cell phones must be turned off when you are on duty at the switchboard or in the kiosk and must be out of sight and not placed on your desk.

Friends may not visit you while at work. It is distracting and detracts from your work. Friends crowding around your work area is not allowed as it discourages customers from approaching. Conversations can also be picked up quite clearly by the switchboard consoles. These situations create an unprofessional atmosphere for callers and kiosk visitors. Friends are not allowed to study with you while you are working.

People allowed in kiosks. Only University Information staff are allowed in kiosks. Friends may not join you while you are on duty. Kiosk doors must be kept locked for your safety. Friends should not “hang out” at the kiosk window. It discourages patrons from approaching.

Unprofessional appearance. Sleeping or resting with your head down on the desk is not appropriate office behavior and presents an unprofessional image to visitors and co-workers and is therefore not allowed. The same holds true for feet propped up on the desk in both the office and the kiosk. *Food in office or kiosks.* It looks unprofessional to have an entire meal spread out in the office or kiosks. Most employees have been scheduled to allow time for eating prior to their work shift or this could be done after the employee is off. Exceptions may occur, and it may be necessary to get food while on duty. Please be aware of the image you are projecting and limit eating a full meal while on duty. Snacks, munchies and drinks are allowed if kept away from computers. **Each employee is expected to keep the workplace clean and tidy. Dispose of outdated materials. Keep resource materials organized at each console station and in the kiosks. IT IS EXPECTED THAT EACH EMPLOYEE TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN KEEPING OUR SPACES CLEAN AND ORGANIZED.**

Dress Code

It is very important that you present a neat, clean, professional image at all times.

You have been given 2 uniform shirts and are expected to wear them when on duty in the kiosks. It is not required to wear them when you are working at the switchboard. Shirts must be kept clean and wrinkle free. In addition:

- No torn or dirty clothing
 - No revealing clothing (i.e., short shorts or short skirts)
 - No exercise clothes, sweatpants, flip-flops
 - No garments advocating drug or alcohol use
- X Clean and neat appearance appropriate for office setting where you greet the public
- Hair must be clean, dry and not falling in your face
 - No hats
 - *Shirts will become your property if you remain in our employ for one full semester (at least 4 months). If you are given shirts and leave the position before one semester of employment, you will be required to pay for the shirts at the rate we purchased them. After 18 months of employment you can receive 2 new shirts. This obligates you for one more semester of employment which exempts you from paying for the new shirts.

Pay Rate and Pay Raises

New employees are paid a starting rate. After 6 months employment and meeting or exceeding a specific set of criteria, employees are eligible for a pay increase. Your work performance will determine how much your increase will be. If you do not meet or exceed the performance criteria you will not be given a raise. Your work performance will determine whether you are asked back for the next semester.

Criteria for Pay Raise for Student Employees

1. Minimum of 6 months employment with Information Services
2. Arrive on time for scheduled shift. Valid emergencies are excused. To qualify, only one late arrival will be allowed without a just cause.
3. Consistently finds a replacement if unable to work scheduled shift and notifies supervisor of any schedule change.

4. Displays excellent customer service skills (includes listening and oral communication skills)
5. Adheres to policies of the area where you work.
6. Works independently, but will ask for assistance when necessary to give accurate information.
7. Has a strong knowledge base of George Mason; retains this information and consistently learns new information.
8. Submits timesheets and other documents by the required due date.
9. Demonstrates a team spirit--willing to pitch in for the good of the area. Demonstrates a willingness to sub.

Termination of Employment

A resigning student employee should notify the supervisor in writing at least two weeks prior to the last day work. This can be done through a written memo or by e-mail. Employees may receive a paycheck after leaving. If you leave our employ before having worked one full semester, you must pay for the shirts given to you (as stated previously).

Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures Communication and feedback are essential for improving both the employee and supervisor's performance. Through open discussion of issues or problems, most situations can be diffused before they become a detriment to the work environment or overall job effectiveness. While mistakes are inevitable, it is reasonable to assume that after being clearly pointed out by a supervisor, the employee will work to rectify the error and avoid occurrence again. When an employee is unwilling to work at correcting a situation brought to his/her attention by a supervisor, a disciplinary problem may exist. This may warrant stronger, more direct measures be taken to ensure that the services provided by University Information are not compromised. Should the Supervisor feel a disciplinary problem exist, a verbal warning will be given. The supervisor will outline the behavioral problem(s). Improvements are expected immediately. Failure to respond positively, or a continuation of the problem could result in dismissal. **Professional office behavior is expected.**

Certain behaviors are grounds for immediate disciplinary procedures:

- a) theft or misuse of office property or funds.
- b) improper use of state owned computers as outlined in state and university policy. This includes downloading unauthorized materials. **Instant messaging and texting is not allowed in any way, shape or form.**
- c) destruction of office property
- d) any activities in violation of the law or University Policy during work hours, including but not limited to alcohol and drug use
- e) two unexcused absences
- f) two unexcused times late for work (Third may lead to immediate dismissal)
- g) leaving your workplace while on duty without the permission of the manger
- h) leaving early without the permission of the manager
- i) misrepresenting the actual hours worked on the timesheet
- j) failure to cooperate and work with co-workers
- k) failure to follow or adhere to operating procedures as outlined in this manual or other materials provided to you

Daily Duties

- Promptly answer all incoming telephone calls and direct callers to appropriate destination --ask questions of caller if you are not sure exactly what information they are seeking.
- X At kiosk, give out accurate and concise information and directions.
- Dispense appropriate information including phone numbers, office locations, directions to the university, event information and basic information regarding Mason
- Hand out brochures, class schedules, etc. as required.
 - Check supplies (maps, brochures, etc) and let manager know when you need more.
- Daily, log incoming calls at appropriate times on tally sheets, or log customers helped at kiosks at appropriate times on tally sheets.
- Log in/out on the virtual time clock and post your work hours daily on the electronic timesheet in Patriot Web. Submit it before the due date. Remember, this is your responsibility!!!!

Opening Procedures

- OFFICE - Unlock office door. Turn on lights. Bring up Time clock, AXIS and TODAY@MASON on all computers.
- KIOSK – Go to office to get key for the kiosk. Key are kept in a labeled cabinet. Unlock kiosk door and put key in designated place; set-up computer for day’s use by bringing up above programs.
- X Check Scheduler Plus and TODAY@MASON to become familiar with what activities are happening on campus each day.

Closing Procedures

- OFFICE - Complete switchboard tally sheet and turn counters back to 0.
- Turn off all computers. Tidy counters and turn off lights in office. Close office door and make sure it is locked.
- KIOSK - Make sure window in kiosk is locked. Leave interior and exterior lights on in kiosk.
- Take out the trash and put a new trash bag in trashcan. Tidy the space.
- Make sure kiosk door is locked. **Do Not Leave Office or Kiosk Unlocked.**
- X Bring kiosk key back to office and store in designated place

TDD Telephone (TDD-Telecommunications Device for the Deaf or TTY TeleType Writer)

This telephone is to receive calls from the hearing impaired.

- X When this phone rings turn on the TDD machine.
 - X Pick up the phone receiver and place in the rubber cups.
 - X When "Announcer On" comes across the screen, press the Shift and 5 keys at the same time and the welcome message will commence. Complete the Welcome by typing in “to George Mason University. GA.”
- It is now their turn to type their inquiry. Answer by typing into the machine.
- X Some helpful abbreviations:
 - GA (go ahead) means it is your turn to respond
 - HD (hold please)
 - Q (question) Use at the end of a sentence as a question mark
 - SK (stop key) means end of conversation; now you will hang up. It is polite to say thank you, or bye, or have a nice day before SK.

Information Desk/Kiosk - Walk-up customers

- As individuals approach the information counter, smile and use the proper greetings:
 - "Hello, may I help you locate something?"
 - "Hello, may I help you?"
 - "Is there information that I may help you locate?"
- X Answer the phone in the kiosk as follows: “Finley Kiosk. This is (your name)”

Telephone Etiquette and Customer Service

REMEMBER: Customers are NOT an interruption of your job...Customers

- When greeting a caller, the proper answering technique is "George Mason University Switchboard, this is (your name _____), how can I help you?" (Do not abbreviate by saying "GMU").
- X When answering in a kiosk, state which kiosk and then your name. “Finley kiosk, this is _____.”
- When transferring a call, announce to the caller that you will be transferring them and verbally repeat the number that you will be connecting them with before transferring.
- Only place a caller on hold when there will be a delay in providing them with information. When placing a caller on hold, inform them that you are placing them on hold to retrieve information for them. If they are holding for 30 seconds or more, get back on the line and assure the caller that you are still searching for the information they requested.
- Always keep an upbeat attitude in the tone of your voice. Portray a professional attitude and image. Sit up

straight and **smile**...that smile will come through in your voice!

- When dealing with a customer that is upset, try to put yourself in their position and understand their frustration. Apologize for their inconvenience and try all options to satisfy their request.
- Always tell the customer what you **can** do for them, do not dwell on what you cannot do for them. **STRESS THE POSITIVE!**
- Go the extra mile - make sure you understand what the customer's question is and that you are giving the correct information. **The words "I don't know" are not in our vocabulary!**
- If the customer is beyond your resources and will not be satisfied, refer them to the following people in this order:
 - Becky Nemeth - Switchboard Manager x31008
 - Bobbie Fuller or Suzy Wiedemann x31005

If none of the people above are available, take as much information as possible and pass it on to one of the above.

Emergency Operating Procedures

- **Emergencies**
Emergency disasters, life threatening incidents, and need to know situations, call George Mason University Police, **using 911**.
- **School closing**
The Provost's Office or Media Relations will notify the Info Services Director regarding the status of the university when there is an emergency or inclement weather (closed, open on time, closing early, opening delayed). The Director or Manager will then program the snow emergency line with a new recorded message containing the following information:
"You have reached the Switchboard at George Mason University. Today (day of week, month, date) all classes (both day and evening, day only, evening only, etc.) are canceled and all administrative offices are closed due to (weather conditions or emergency conditions). This includes the Fairfax, Arlington and Prince William Campuses. Please check the Mason website or call this number, for further information or updates." The University Switchboard (x31000) is always the definitive place for inclement weather closings or changes in schedule regardless of what the radio or TV stations are saying.
- **Bomb threat**
Keep the person on the line as long as possible. Immediately hit the TRACE button on the console. Proceed with the "Bomb Threat" checklist located in the green book. Notify University Police (911). Complete written report provided by University Police.
- X **Power Outage**
In case of a power outage, we have flashlights, but our office has been wired with emergency lighting. The Telephone and Voice Mail system will continue on emergency power for a limited amount of time. If after hours, please notify Becky at home. We will also need to use the paper telephone directories for numbers.
- X **Fire Alarm Goes Off**
Turn all consoles off so they go to NIGHT mode. Calls will then transfer to the JC Desk. Exit the building and gather at the 4th bench in front of the building to make sure everyone is out. Call the JC Desk, Finley, and Becky to notify them that we are out of the office.
- **Campus Wide or Local Emergency**
NOTE: If there is a local or campus wide emergency where we need to have the Switchboard remain open for a longer period of time or have additional operators on hand, **YOU WILL BE CALLED IN.**

And Also Remember.....

We are a team. We work together and share the same spaces. To make the working environment better for everyone please abide by the following:

Keep all necessary information arranged neatly on the desk and the clipboards. Throw away your own trash (food and drink containers, etc.) and leave the work area as you want to find it.

As a courtesy to your fellow co-workers, if you have a cold please use the Clorox cleaner on the phone receiver when your shift has ended...germs would love to visit us all, but we'd rather not share them with you.

NOTES:

Updated:07/01/08