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# Launching a Library Career in a Fully Remote Work Environment

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## Objective

This poster aims to outline one librarian's experience obtaining their first professional role as a health sciences librarian during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## My Experience

- Graduated with my MLIS degree in May 2020 during the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Fully online program provided experience with technology
- Library assistant positions that transitioned to virtual during the pandemic
  - Foundation of providing academic library services virtually
- Applying for out of state jobs while living in Fort Lauderdale, FL
  - Positions were frozen
  - Uncertainty of moving out of state during a pandemic
- Interview Process
  - Virtual Interviews
  - Limited opportunity for in-person
  - Harder to build rapport during interviews

## Results

I was hired for my first professional role as a Research and Education Informationist at the Medical University of South Carolina in October 2020 and began my position in a fully remote work environment. In starting my position, I completed the onboarding process remotely, attended an online orientation, and became very familiar with Microsoft Teams.

## Building Connections Virtually

- Weekly all staff meetings
- Bi-weekly Research and Education Services Team Huddles
- One-on-one touch base meetings
  - With supervisor
  - With the Library Director
- Meet and greet sessions
  - With all library staff
  - With liaison program faculty
- Watercooler sessions with the Research and Education Services team
- Virtual shadowing sessions
- Using the chat feature on Teams to replicate in-office communication

## Continuing Education/ Professional Development

- Conferences shifted to virtual platforms
  - Easier to attend
  - Limited networking opportunities
- Trainings were offered remotely
  - More opportunities to learn
  - Recordings allowed for flexibility around schedule conflicts
- Increased ability for collaboration
- Focus on wellness
  - Attended webinars on self-care
  - Mindfulness trainings were provided to staff

## Challenges

- Building relationships with my team – most of whom I had never met
- Beginning the position virtually as a new career librarian
- Learning about the university while living over 600 miles away
  - Chat service
  - Understanding the culture of MUSC
- “Zoom fatigue”
  - Back-to-back meetings
  - Virtual trainings and conferences
- Work/Home life balance

## Conclusions

Being hired as a librarian in a fully remote setting during the COVID-19 pandemic helped me strengthen my communication skills as I built relationships with my team solely through Microsoft Teams and e-mail communication. This experience pushed me out of my comfort zone by learning to collaborate with people I have never met in person before and increased my ability to adapt to rapidly changing situations.

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