

Derrick Amissah

4/19/2026

IT HELP DESK

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

CYSE 368/Internship

Spring 2026

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Introduction

In September 2025 I began my employment with the Old Dominion University IT Help Desk. I chose to take this job as I was seeking an environment where I could utilize the knowledge I gained within my schooling. My internship with the IT Help Desk has allowed me to use the knowledge from my classroom to the systems that are present in the university itself. My primary goals for this internship were formed because of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that I signed when starting my employment with the IT Help Desk. My goals included acquiring technical skills, enhancing my communication skills with non-technical individuals, and gaining expertise in the systems that are used within the IT Department, such as ServiceNow and MIDAS.

A little background on ODU as an organization. The college began in 1930 as part of the College of William & Mary. It became independent in 1962 and became a university in 1969. Today, it is a R1 (research universities with very high research activity) institution that supports over 10,000 students and offers many programs across its various colleges. Some of the research specialties of the college include maritime studies and health sciences. The IT Help Desk provides technical support for the university, including its Wi-Fi, learning management systems like canvas, and other technical issues customers are having. The main users of these systems include students, faculty, and staff. ODU has over 24,000 students that attend the school, many who are students with military connections. Additionally, the school has partnered with Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) to expand its IT systems to support the medical school and its related technologies.

When I first started working at the Help Desk, one of the main goals of the training was to help me understand how the workplace runs and what kind of employee I was supposed to be. Before I ever started working with computers or taking calls, I was first introduced to the culture of the Help Desk and the ways that we are to act and present ourselves to the customers and other employees of the organization. This involves understanding the dress code, which ensures we look professional when interacting with students, faculty, and staff. Another critical training element was the Personal Device Waiver which describes when Personal devices can be used. This was important to protect users' personal and sensitive information from leaking. Next, I was introduced to the communication tools we use daily to speak with customers. I learned how to use 8x8 Work and the 8x8 Virtual Contact Center software to take in calls, place callers on hold, transfer calls to other technicians, and communicate with other technicians in the company. Although it was overwhelming at first, the help desk ensured that each step was taught to me in a no pressured environment where I could practice the new skills. One of the most important lessons in this phase was learning how to handle Hotline Calls. Hotline Calls are for important and urgent matters that arise on the campus, such as system outages. If the professor that is on the phone with the classroom places a Hotline Call, the call will go directly to the Help Desk. When we receive the call, we must radio for a staff member that is in Classroom Central and dispatch them to the location of the issue to resolve it. This helped teach me the importance of the Help Desk and how vital it is to the campus.

Following an introduction to the basics of the job, the next phase of training focused on learning how to help someone with a problem. During this phase of training, I was introduced to a four-step troubleshooting process: evaluate the situation, decide on a course of action, validate

that the decision with someone of higher authority, and aid the customer. For example, if a user is contacting the Help Desk with concerns about two-factor authentication, I will first ask if they have a new phone or phone number. Based upon their answer, if it is a new phone I guide the user by reactivating their phone, but if a new phone number I guided the user by removing their old number from the system, then instructing them to add the new phone number. Finally, I check that everything works and explains the solution to the user. Along with the technical aspects of troubleshooting, a large focus was placed on customer etiquette. Much of the training focused upon ensuring that I would remain courteous and respectful of the customers, even if the caller was becoming stressed or frustrated with the situation that they were facing. This phase taught me that communication skills are just as important as technical skills. Being able to explain things clearly and kindly helps build trust and makes the experience better for the person calling in.

Following learning how to communicate and troubleshoot, the next part of the training included the systems that we use to solve the problems. I was given access to MIDAS, the system that is used to manage user accounts. Within MIDAS, I was able to learn how to reset passwords for users, unlock accounts for users, and aid in setting up their Duo Two-Factor Authentication system. This system allowed me to resolve one of the most common issues that we see with users: locked out of their accounts. I was also trained extensively on ServiceNow, which is the ticketing system for the university. When an issue occurs with users, they will typically send an email to the Help Desk. When I receive those emails, they are converted into a ticket with an incident number. I have also been trained on how to create tickets to request items from the university, assign tickets to various teams within the Help Desk, and to close tickets after I receive the items that I requested from the university. This helps to keep track of all the tickets that are opened and to ensure that no tickets are missed. In addition, I also learned how to use the Knowledge Base. The Knowledge Base holds guides and documented solutions to many of the issues that come up with. I learned how to use this resource to efficiently find solutions to problems without having to guess the cause of it.

As I continued to learn about the university and its programs, I was also introduced to different software that was used across the university. Some of the software that I learned about included Canvas (a learning management system), Banner (a student and administrative records system), Zoom (for communication between the students and the instructors), and the Monarch Virtual Environment (MOVE) which is a virtual computer that users can use if their own devices is acting up. Learning about these different systems allowed me to understand the different types of issues that could arise with those systems. The final and most specialized part of the training was integrated with EVMC (Eastern Virginia Medical Center). Medical related tickets must be handled in a different manner due to the sensitive nature of the information that is involved with those tickets. I was trained on how to recognize these types of tickets and forward them to the appropriate Medical Support Groups.

Management

The management environment at the Old Dominion University IT Help Desk is structured in a way that supports the student employees and ensures that any issues can be resolved efficiently. Depending on the situation, Help Desk managers can guide the student technicians through the process of troubleshooting the issues that are reported by university users.

The person at the top of the Help Desk management structure is Stefan, the Help Desk Manager. Stefan is responsible for making sure the Help Desk overall operates as it should. Stefan is responsible for making schedules for the student workers and signing off on their timesheets, so they get paid on time. In addition, he is responsible for system access for Help Desk technicians. Stefan is the Help Desk manager and helps facilitate an organized environment for staff and students.

Eddie performs several important duties for the student technicians. One of his main jobs is grading tickets to make sure the student technicians complete the tickets properly according to the standards of the Help Desk. If the student technicians encounter any difficulty with a user's ticket, Eddie can escalate the ticket to provide the student technician with the information necessary to respond to the user's ticket request. This support allows the student to learn and the user to receive appropriate help. Eddie ensures the Knowledge Base remains up to date with technician notes. This allows technicians to quickly find the information they need to assist with a call or ticket. Eddie's support ensures the quality of the Help Desk and its resources.

Another important supervisor for the Help Desk is Galen Cole. Galen is supposed to assist with the Help Desk in his daily operations. He also grades tickets and guide students to ensure that all work is completed correctly. Galen also answers calls and helps with general Help Desk tickets. Finally, he also supervises the student technicians to ensure that all the procedures and rules are followed. Galen's role as the part-time supervisor for the Help Desk is also important in that he can assist the Help Desk with various jobs and responsibilities.

Some of the issues that are encountered by technicians are more complex than others, and as such, require higher-level support to resolve. Those who handle such escalated issues include technicians such as Chris Kundrat, Jeremiah Robinson, and Larry Teasley. These individuals work to resolve the most complex issues for the technicians, often providing support to the students in resolving those same issues for them. Furthermore, these supervisors ensure that the escalated issues are appropriately resolved for the organization overall.

As part of the Help Desk, the student employees are also a major part of the team. Call and ticket intake and support for users with common issues is performed by the Help Desk. Management understands the knowledge that the student employees are still learning the job but

are still able to take any incoming calls and support the users with their questions and issues. Questions are encouraged to be asked of supervisors, and escalated tickets can be created for escalated issues. Through feedback from the supervisors of the student employees, we improve our skills within the Help Desk. Making the Help Desk itself is a learning environment for each of the students.

Major Work Duties, Assignments, and Their Importance

During my internship at the Old Dominion University IT Help Desk, my main job is to assist the students, professors, and staff by taking their phone calls and incoming visits to the Help Desk. One of the main tasks that I must complete for the IT Department is resetting their passwords for them, which is one of the more common issues that users have with campus networks and software. Being able to provide these password resets for the users is crucial to the university as all the users must have accounts to access the various systems of the university. Without access to those passwords, the users would be unable to complete their tasks within the university.

One of my most important responsibilities is handling MIDAS password reset requests. Before a password reset can be performed for a user, that user must provide certain information to verify their identity. Such information includes their name, a form of photo ID, their UIN, their date of birth, and their phone number. By requesting this information from users, we can ensure that we are providing access to the correct individual to the MIDAS software, which helps to prevent security breaches of the university's systems.

DA, Derrick Amissah

Hello,

If you have previously requested an email token, please check your junk/spam folder.

If you cannot successfully create a new password using self-reset, IT will reset your MIDAS password. You will need to follow one of the following procedures:

1. Come in person to the IT Help Desk in Monarch Hall, present a picture ID and request to have their MIDAS password reset <https://www.odu.edu/ts/helpdesk>
2. If you are out of the area, you must fax a picture of your ID to 757-683-5616 or you can reply to this email (itshelp@odu.edu) and attach a copy of a picture ID. Please include:
 - o Your full name
 - o valid photo ID (drivers license, ODU ID, passport)
 - o Your University Identification Number (UIN)
 - o Your date of birth
 - o A phone number

We will call you once your information is received so we can reset your password over the phone.

Regards,
IT Help Desk

Additional comments • 2026-04-06 16:30:52

DA, Derrick Amissah





Sending user admin password reset instructions so we can verify identity

Work notes (Internal) • 2026-04-06 16:30:52

Another of the major duties of the job is to assist the users both in person at the walk-in desk and over the phone using the 8x8 phone system. Assisting in person allows for a better understanding of the user's issues with the product. Many of the users that come into the Help Desk are in an upset state due to being locked out of their account or missing some important service that they require. It is necessary to remain calm and professional with these users to allow for the issues to be properly resolved. Providing such positive experiences with the Help

Desk for these users helps to create a positive reflection of the IT Department and the University as a whole.

Currently responsible for creating, updating, and managing tickets in ServiceNow. All tickets must be documented in a way that allows the support ticket to be tracked and followed for resolution. By being able to create these tickets and document the resolutions in the ticketing system, the Help Desk can remain accountable for all tickets and to track their progress. Personally, I have become much more familiar with ServiceNow, and I am able to complete most tickets without difficulty. Additionally, I have become more experienced in the ability to research issues, provide solutions, and document those solutions in the ticketing system.

INC0625991		Channel	Email
Helene Clehr	 	State	Closed
Department of Communication & Theatre Arts		Impact	2 - Medium
Help Desk		Urgency	2 - Medium
		Priority	3 - Moderate
Drive account?			
received from: HCLEHR@ODU.EDU			
Hello ITS,			
I'm retiring, and my replacement hasn't been hired yet. There are lots of things that need saving! We have a shared email account, Theatre@odu.edu, used solely by my position and the Theatre chair (who also changes).			
Is it possible to create a Drive account for Theatre@odu.edu, so I can save important information and files for whoever is in those positions in the future?			
Thank you, and I sure hope so,			

One of the things that I enjoy the most about my work at the Help Desk is when I have to research the question that is asked by the users and find the correct answer for their ticket. For instance, one of our faculty members who was retiring asked if it was possible to create a Drive account for their shared department email to save their important files and information for future staff members. I was able to research the answer to this question and let them know that a shared folder can be created through submitting an Account Request through MIDAS. I was also able to provide steps for the staff members to complete the request themselves. This type of problem is one of the more rewarding issues that we solve for users since it can assist in the protection of the university's data.

Application of Cybersecurity

Before I began my internship at the Old Dominion University IT Help Desk, my knowledge of cybersecurity concepts was limited to the information I learned in my classes about the topic. My cybersecurity knowledge came mainly from understanding concepts like password security and authentication in the classroom, for instance. However, through my

internship at the IT Help Desk, I was able to see in what ways many of those cybersecurity rules are applied within the organization, as well as the reason for the implementation of those rules by the organization overall.

One of the skills I knew going into the internship was the importance of performing identity checks. I knew that only the right person should be using the systems, but I did not know how strict the rules would have to be for performing identity checks. Prior to the internship, I did not know how critical it was to confirm the identity of the users before offering them the services that I would need to provide for them. For instance, I had to collect users full name, picture ID, UIN, date of birth, and phone number to perform a password reset. If any of this information was missing, the individual would not be able to perform a password reset for themselves. While at first this seemed uncomfortable to me asking the user, I understand that these steps are critical in preventing unauthorized access from account theft from happening.

Another cybersecurity idea I learned well on the job was identity and access management. This means controlling who gets to access certain systems and information. This was used every time I had to either unlock an account for someone or deny someone's access. When I denied someone access to an account to reset their password because they did not have a valid ID, I learned that cybersecurity is not about helping people in every situation. It is about protecting those accounts for the company even when someone is upset with being denied access to their account.

Another thing I gained experience with was multi-factor security, specifically Duo two factor login. I knew ahead of time that two factor security added an extra layer of protection to an account. However, I learned how this could help prevent account break ins and phishing attempts. Many users got angry at being required to utilize Duo, but I was able to explain to them why it was necessary for their accounts. As a result, my ability to explain rules and security protocols in simple terms allowed many users to understand how the protocols were in place for their protection.

The final cybersecurity skill I acquired was noticing and preventing social engineering. Some users would attempt to shortcut the process or security measures if they were stressed or pressed for time. Over time, I recognized that this is a red flag. This taught me to abide by the rules and all steps, even if someone rushed me.

How the ODU Curriculum Prepared Me for My Internship

The curriculum I learned in my classes helped me in my internship in a couple of simple ways, but there were also aspects of my internship that my education did not prepare me for. In my classes, I learned the main ideas regarding cybersecurity and how to protect accounts and systems from unauthorized access. These concepts prepared me for my internship but did not

prepare me for the aspects of the work that involved knowledge only. My internship helped me to understand how the concepts learned in my classes can be applied in the real world and to real people.

For many of the topics that I learned in school, I was able to make connections to the skills that I utilized during my internship. For example, my learning about Identity and Access Management (IAM) in my cybersecurity classes is one of these topics. While IAM was discussed in my classroom, I utilized IAM daily during my internship to provide access or deny access to those who were attempting to gain access to my systems. Furthermore, my learning about multi-factor authentication in my classroom also allowed me to utilize Duo and two-factor authentication during my internship to ensure that my accounts were protected from being taken over by others.

There were several moments throughout the internship that indicated that my education at school had strengthened what I learned in my internship. For instance, in my classes, we were taught the importance of following the security rules for a system, even if it was inconvenient. However, enforcing such rules on users that became upset at having to follow such rules indicated to me the importance of such rules. Additionally, observing some of these users became upset and attempted to ignore security rules indicated to me the importance of such concepts in my cybersecurity classes.

Furthermore, I also learned new skills and methods that I had not learned in school yet. One of the biggest skills that I learned was how to explain security rules to non-technical users. This is a skill that I have not learned in my education yet but one that is used in the workplace every single day. I also learned about documentation which involves using ServiceNow ticketing. Knowing how to appropriately write service tickets shows responsibility in the cybersecurity field.

The ODU cybersecurity curriculum provided me with a solid start in my education, but my internship helped me to finish my understanding of the field. In my classes, I learned about what and why cybersecurity, but during my internship, I learned about how to do it. Working at the Help Desk, I got to see the applications of cybersecurity daily. In addition, it helped me understand better the principles that I learned in my cybersecurity courses.

Fulfillment of the Internship

My internship allowed me to reach the majority of my goals, but also to see which areas I still require more practice in achieving those goals. My goals were to gain technical skills, improve my communication with non-technical individuals, and to become familiar with systems like ServiceNow and MIDAS. I feel that my internship provided me with the experience necessary to reach these goals. While I did not have access to some of the more advanced

technical skills during my internship, I gained skills with the basic functions of the systems that are common in IT support positions. Additionally, my internship allowed me to connect the skills that I learned in my schooling to the actual work that must be performed in IT support.

One of my main goals was to build basic technical skills. This goal was met through my work at the Help Desk. I used systems like MIDAS to reset passwords for users, unlock user accounts, and setup users for Duo login. Additionally, I used ServiceNow to open and close tickets for users based on their reported problems. Lastly, I accessed the Knowledge Base for solutions to questions and concerns that came up during my Help Desk tenure. Each of these responsibilities provided me with experience correcting common tech problems implemented throughout the university.

Another key goal was to improve my communication skills with the organization's non-technical end users. This goal was also fully met during the internship. Many of the individuals with whom I had to communicate with, including students, faculty, and staff members, did not understand the technical steps that were required of them. However, I was able to learn how to communicate those steps to them in layman's language. I also learned how to remain courteous and patient with individuals who were becoming upset or frustrated with the technical issues that they were encountering.

A third major goal was to learn more about university systems like ServiceNow and MIDAS. This goal was also fully met through the use of these systems throughout the job. MIDAS was primarily used to access my identity, change my passwords, and manage my accounts. ServiceNow was primarily used to track tickets, assign work, and write down solutions for later use.

My final goal was to learn about how the IT systems work within the university, specifically about platforms like Canvas, Banner, Zoom, MOVE, and the special area for EVMC. While I did not fully succeed in fixing all these systems, I learned about them and the issues that individuals have with each system. Additionally, I learned about how medical tickets would have to be handled differently than the other tickets due to the sensitive information regarding the students who were presented with these tickets. However, I learned how each of these systems was connected to the IT system of the entire university.

Motivating and Exciting Aspects of My Internship

Being at the Help Desk was one of the most motivating experiences I have had at work due to the importance of IT support. One of the most exciting aspects of the job was the immediate effect of helping the users of the systems. For instance, if a student or staff member had an immediate problem with one of the systems that they needed to access for their school or job, I could assist them immediately in resolving that issue. Seeing those individuals relieved of

their problems or gratitude for being able to assist them was extremely motivating for me each and every day.

Another exciting part of the internship was the fast technical learning that occurred each day. Each day brought new issues, whether they related to passwords and accounts or working with the software and systems. I was able to learn how to deal with a variety of issues each day. I became very familiar with systems like MIDAS, ServiceNow, Duo, and Knowledge Base. Additionally, since the employees presented different issues each day, I had to learn how to solve those problems, rather than encountering the same problems each day as in the classroom. Thus, each day was both challenging and interesting.

One of the most motivating aspects of the internship was the problem-solving experience. Each ticket had problems that had to be solved in a step-by-step manner. Some tickets had relatively easy problems to solve while others required more research or escalation to other departments to resolve the user's issue. Yet each problem was satisfying to resolve. Being able to fix these problems gave me a lot of confidence in my technical skills.

The other exciting aspect of the internship was the variety of work and the social environment. I had a variety of different social interactions with individuals from a variety of backgrounds on the college campus. These interactions were some of the best aspects of the job that made each day interesting and helped me to improve my communication skills during the internship. One of my favorite parts about going to work is the people I work with. They are the most understanding, and funniest group of people I have ever met. It like having a work family, and it makes the stress from the job easier to handle. They guide me through work and things outside work, for example what classes I should be taking to get the most out of my college education.

Finally, the internship was motivating due to the career growth and educational opportunities it offered me. I learned from experienced personnel and what future positions will be in the IT field. The Help Desk also allowed me to improve skills that will be helpful in future jobs. Furthermore, I was able to see the possible long-term career that exists in the technology field in general. This internship provided me with the information that I needed to understand how this could all be of benefit to my future career.

Discouraging & Challenging Parts About the Internship

Working at the Help Desk allowed me to acquire valuable skills, but there were challenges along the way that were also quite discouraging. These challenges were primarily the repetitive tasks associated with the job, the high volume of calls that I had to take, and the

interactions with users who were quite difficult to work with. All these challenges made the job quite demanding at times.

One of the more discouraging aspects of the internship was the number of repetitive tasks that were assigned to individuals throughout the day. Many of the tickets required the technician to perform password resets and account unlocks for customers who were otherwise unable to access their accounts. While these tasks were important to perform, they were often repetitive tasks that can lead to exhaustion and lack motivation to continue performing such tasks. Additionally, there were few opportunities throughout the internship to challenge myself with more complex technical problems.

Another challenge was receiving so many calls, especially at the start of the semester. Calls would come one after another without a moment to catch our breath or write down any notes. This was extremely stressful for a new trainee. It was also difficult to remain focused for such long hours, which often led to mental tiredness, especially during busy periods at the help desk.

Handling upset users was somewhat discouraging during the internship. Many of the individuals who contacted the Help Desk were already stressed over their deadlines or computer issues. Some expected us to solve their problems right away, while others didn't even disclose what their problem was. There was an element of empathy and professionalism needed in handling Help Desk tickets. Eventually, I became accustomed to interacting with frustrated customers who were having problems with computers or accounts during their hectic Help Desk hours every day.

Although I was frustrated by these elements of the internship, they ultimately helped me grow from the experience. Such assignments made me more reliable in my job. The high call volume helped me to remain calm under pressure. Assisting with difficult customers allowed me to improve my communication skills with others. While it's not easy at all, this portion of the internship has helped me to learn how to remain professional in my work. All these experiences will help me in the future in relation to my career in IT and cybersecurity.

Advice For Future Interns at the Help Desk

Future interns that work at the Help Desk will encounter a variety of tasks. However, the most important piece of advice that can be given to these future interns is to always remain patient and calm. Many individuals that contact the Help Desk are often in a state of frustration or stress due to the issues that they are encountering themselves with the systems of the college. Remaining calm will help to defuse the situation of stressed users, allowing the resolution to the issues to come quickly and efficiently.

Another key piece of advice is to learn the systems early and frequently. Many of them will be used day in and day out on the job so if you get comfortable with them quickly, the job will be much easier. There is nothing wrong with asking questions or researching answers on the job if you don't know the answer to a specific question. The job requires learning and improving over time, which is something that supervisors are expecting of their interns and students. The more comfortable you are with the systems and tools of the job, the more confident and efficient you will become.

Future interns should also focus heavily on their communication skills. Much of the role involves explaining technical and security processes to individuals who are not familiar with those processes and tasks, such as password resets, identity verification, and meeting security requirements like two-factor authentication. It is important to ensure that the explanations to these individuals are free of technical terms and language that they may not understand, and work to make clear the processes even though the issue cannot be resolved right away.

Conclusion

Overall, it was a great learning experience for me from the internship. I learned how to use the things that I learned in class in actual situations at the IT Help Desk. Additionally, I became more familiar with systems like ServiceNow and MIDAS. I also learned how important communication and problem-solving skills are at the Help Desk. I intend to continue my education at ODU and expand my abilities in the technical and cyber security fields. This internship has provided me with a wonderful foundation to complete my education and begin my career in cybersecurity.

References

All images were provided by me and were obtained using the system access granted to me.

