Reference Services

Overview: This policy is intended to promote a uniform standard of service of the highest possible quality. It is intended for both Library staff and patrons.

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A. Definitions*

Reference Transactions: are information consultations in which library staff recommend, interpret, evaluate, and/or use information resources to help others to meet particular information needs. Reference transactions do not include formal instruction or exchanges that provide assistance with locations, schedules, equipment, supplies, or policy statements.

Reference Work: includes reference transactions and other activities that involve the creation, management, and assessment of information or research resources, tools, and services.

- Creation and management of information resources: includes the development and maintenance of research collections, research guides, catalogs, databases, web sites, search engines, etc., that patrons can use independently, in-house or remotely, to satisfy their information needs.
- Assessment activities: include the measurement and evaluation of reference work, resources, and services.

B. Policy

B-1. Introduction:

Regent University Library provides reference services to meet the informational and instructional needs of Library patrons, within the limits of time, staffing, resources, and the professional judgment of the reference librarians. The general service goal of the Department is to meet the information/research needs of Library patrons (faculty, students, staff, and other patrons) accurately, efficiently, and pleasantly. An additional goal is to provide instruction so that patrons may become more independent in their use of Library resources.
B-2. Types of services provided may include:

- Helping in clarification of research problems, developing good search strategies, and finding and evaluating information
- Introducing students and faculty to the use of new technologies in information access
- Validating/checking citations
- Locating known items
- Responding to directional questions
- Helping patrons navigate the Library’s website
- Helping patrons evaluate information sources
- Referring patrons to other libraries or agencies when appropriate
- Referring patrons to subject specialists
- Teaching information literacy skills at levels appropriate to each patron
- Helping patrons perform basic technical operations, such as downloading, uploading, sending articles and using databases
- Offering in-depth consultations to students and faculty by appointment

B-3. Limits to service. The Library staff will not:

- Perform research. Generally, patrons asking simple reference questions will have the information provided to them, while patrons with more difficult and involved questions will be instructed in how to conduct their own research.
- Interpret materials and assignments. Reference librarians do not interpret information such as medical, legal, financial, statistical or tax information, or class assignments. Students with questions about a class assignment are referred to the professor.
- Violate copyright law.
- Act in a manner that violates the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association.
- Perform genealogical research. Genealogy questions are referred to the relevant local public library.
- Compile bibliographies. Reference staff will not compile or check bibliographies. Reference librarians do assist patrons in the use of bibliographical tools and in identifying, interpreting and verifying citations.
- Lend reference materials. Please see the policy on non-circulating materials for more information.
- Pull books or other items in response to a telephone call to hold for a person.
- Proofread or edit student papers. Students are advised to consult the University Writing Center for assistance.
C. **Process/Procedure.**

Inquiries are handled as staffing and time allow. Answers are provided to quick, factual reference questions. We encourage patrons to schedule a virtual or on-campus appointment with a librarian for inquiries requiring extensive instruction, time, and/or use of Library resources.

Questions are answered during normal reference hours. Reference questions received over the weekend are answered as soon as possible.

D. **Contact Information.**

You can request reference assistance by email, instant message, phone, text message, or in-person. Please see [http://libanswers.regent.edu/](http://libanswers.regent.edu/) for more information.

*This policy was reviewed and approved by the university librarians on May 3rd, 2013.*

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