

The Reading Area Community College Library Reference and Research Policy

Commitment to patron service provides the foundation for the Reading Area Community College (RACC) Library's provision of reference and research services. RACC Library staff provide reference and research services to RACC students, staff, and faculty, as well as to non-RACC individuals and institutions who request these services. Although members of the RACC community have priority, RACC Library staff provide reference service as quickly as possible for non-RACC patrons and institutions.

RACC Library staff provide reference services in person, by telephone, by mail, by fax, by social media, or by email. If possible, RACC Library staff answer simple reference questions received by telephone while the patron is on the line. However, if questions require more in-depth research, the library staff may not be able to provide an answer immediately and will contact the patron as soon as possible with research results. Results may also be sent directly to the patron by mail, by fax, or by email. More complex searches might require the recommendation that the patron visit the library in person.

The RACC Library staff reserves the right to refuse reference requests which violate local, state, or federal law, such as, but not limited to, requests which are violations of copyright, obscenity, pornography, sexual harassment, or privacy laws. The library staff cannot assist patrons in completing print or online forms such as government or employment forms. The library staff are not accountable for the validity of published information or for patrons' use of information provided. Moreover, the library staff do not interpret laws, diagnose medical conditions, or recommend materials or companies for purchase or hire. The library staff do not provide instructions on specific computer programs.

If the resources of the RACC Library cannot satisfy the patron's request, the RACC library staff will contact other libraries or resource centers to attempt to discover a source. If the patron needs to visit another facility to acquire the needed information, the library staff will provide guidance in the use of the recommended facility.

The level of the reference request determines which RACC library staff member should provide service. All RACC library staff members answer directional questions such as locations of library features including the Service Desk, online catalog, computer workstations, photocopiers, printers, scanners, displays, collections, offices, study rooms, testing center, bathrooms. Student staff members answer directional questions only.

In addition to directional questions, RACC library assistants assist patrons in the basic use of the online catalog, computer workstations, media equipment, photocopiers, printers, scanners, retrieval of library materials, and explanations of library policies and procedures.

In addition to the above services RACC library paraprofessionals provide basic reference services to patrons. They conduct introductory reference interviews and determine the level of

the research request. They provide research services or refer the patron to the RACC reference librarians if they determine that the patron needs more research assistance. They assist patrons in online catalog features and basic reference sources. They provide instructions in basic library search techniques. They provide instruction in the operation of library software and technology. They cannot provide instruction or advice on the use of patrons' personal software, phones, or computers.

Faculty reference librarians provide the highest level of professional reference service. Patrons should interface with the reference librarian before pursuing other sources including interlibrary loan. They provide in-depth library research and instruction. If appropriate, they recommend patrons to other facilities for further research and instruct patrons in the effective use of those facilities. If a reference librarian is not available, the patron can schedule a meeting by email or telephone.

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