

OFFICE: Benedictine Library
Reference

DATE: January 12, 2004 **REVISED:** November 8, 2005
CATEGORY: Policy
SUBJECT: Reference Policy

POLICY

Statement on Mission

The Library Reference Policy reflects the mission of the Benedictine Library as stated in the Benedictine Library Mission Statement.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Benedictine Library is to support the curriculum of Benedictine University by providing resources and research services to faculty, staff and the student body.

Statement of Ethics

The Benedictine Library and its reference staff will try, to the best of their ability, to provide accurate and up-to-date answers to all reference questions. Reference inquiries will be kept confidential, and an impartial attitude will be adopted in dealing with patrons. The Library follows the “Code of Ethics,” “The Freedom to Read Statement,” and the “Library Bill of Rights” of the American Library Association.

Goals

- The reference desk will be staffed with professional librarians who are committed to providing accurate, up-to-date answers to reference questions.
- The reference librarians will promote the resources and services of the Library.
- The reference librarians will provide informal instruction in the use of library resources to all users.
- The reference librarians will work to build a reference collection in accordance with the Benedictine Library Collection Development Policy to support the needs of the University community.

Personnel

The reference desk is staffed by a professional librarian during the hours the library is open, except on Sunday evenings from 9-11pm and occasionally on weekdays due to campus wide meetings.

Clientele

The Benedictine Library will offer reference service to all patrons, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or age, during the hours that the library is open to the public. The Benedictine Library will give first priority to faculty, staff and students. The Benedictine Library will give second priority to people outside the University community who request assistance. In addition, priority is given to in-person inquiries, but phone messages, email and online chat messages will be answered in a prompt manner.

Services

The reference staff at the Benedictine Library will:

- Assist patrons in using the collection, the online catalog, online databases, CD-ROM resources and the Internet.
- Assist in formulating effective research strategies
- Suggest appropriate resources
- Provide quick factual information
- Determine if the library has a particular item
- Provide directional information regarding the library and its collections as well as the campus, including University contact information
- Assist with auxiliary technologies (photocopiers, printers, vendacoder, moveable shelving, etc.)
- Refer to other libraries for additional information

The reference staff at the Benedictine Library will not:

- Give out advice (e.g., legal, medical, psychological, religious, or tax, etc.)
- Conduct patent, trademark or legal research for patrons
- Engage in “trivial pursuit” in the case of contest questions or the like
- Give out personal telephone numbers and addresses
- Proctor tests

Research Consultations

Research consultations are available at the Benedictine Library to faculty, staff, and students of Benedictine University. Research consultations are scheduled in advance to insure uninterrupted time for the researcher to consult with a librarian about appropriate resources and strategies for a project.

Referral

If an inquiry cannot be answered after exhausting the Benedictine Library’s resources, the patron or inquiry will be referred to another library or source.

Reference Evaluation

Evaluation of the Benedictine Library’s reference service will occur on an annual basis. The evaluation will include the following criteria: 1) review and interpretation of reference statistics, 2) analysis of how well the reference section is serving the public, 3) what has been done and what can be done to improve the service, and 4) evaluation of the reference collection as determined by the reference collection development policy.

Policy Review

Review and updates of the Benedictine Library Reference Policy will occur when needed in accordance with any changes that may occur or conflict with the present policy.

Reference Collection

Reference Collection Development Policy (October 1995)

The Reference Collection is a non-circulating collection of materials brought together in a special collection because of their format and the nature of the information provided. Reference materials are consulted for short periods and for bits of information. They are separated from the circulating collection, because to allow check-out would cause inconvenience to more library users than it would benefit. Exceptions are seldom made and only with the approval of a Librarian.

It is the nature and format of the information, and how it is anticipated the library’s clientele and staff will use the materials, that go into the judgment of whether various items will be made part of the reference collection. Interests and needs of the college community—primarily students, then faculty, administrators and staff—are the priority for the basis of selection.

The aim of the selection policy is to acquire and retain works, which are currently the most authoritative in their fields. The collection should be kept up-to-date by the acquisition of new materials and the retirement of superseded volumes. Older standard reference works of historical and scholarly interest are selectively retained. The collection should include basic introductory reference sources, which provide a general overview of most subject areas taught at the college. Coverage for legal sources is moderately advanced providing information beyond the introductory level and supplementing the separate government documents collection.

The reference collection includes titles in various formats including print, microforms, CD-ROMs, and electronic access (e.g., available over the Internet or from commercial vendors). Availability, ease of use, cost, timeliness, space and equipment requirements, and preservation issues are considered in selecting the format for specific reference works.

Print

Materials housed in the reference collection and denoted by the letter “R” on the call number label do not circulate, except to faculty, and then only with the permission of a librarian. Reference materials must be used only in the library—they must not be taken to other departments or offices in the building without permission. Faculty may charge a reference item out only overnight.

Electronic Resources

The electronic resources available through the library website are primarily for the use of current Benedictine University students, faculty and staff; although, the electronic resources can be used by any patrons who enter the library. Access to the electronic resources from anywhere outside the library is restricted to current Benedictine students, faculty, and staff.

Approved by: _____
Jack Fritts – Director of Library Services

Date: _____

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