Title: Reference Services Policy

Division/Department: Lenoir-Rhyne University Libraries, Rudisill Library

Related Policy(ies): N/A

Purpose
To provide guidelines regarding provision of reference services.

Policy
In accomplishing its mission of providing information services to the Lenoir-Rhyne University (LRU) community, Rudisill Library staff will provide reference service in a variety of formats, primarily in-person, by telephone, via email, and via chat to students, faculty, and staff. It will provide limited reference service to community patrons and alumni.

In-person and Telephone Reference service:
- Librarians and staff members will normally answer “ready reference” and verification questions at the time asked.
- Staff members will direct all reference questions, especially those requiring lengthy research (“consultation” questions), to the librarians.
- Time constraints may not permit librarians to answer research (“consultation”) questions at the time asked. If it does not, they may ask the patron to wait or to make an appointment.
- Librarians may make exceptions for questions regarding LRU archives or other LRU-exclusive information. If such questions require lengthy research, they may ask the patron to meet another time.
- Reference service to community patrons will be provided on a limited basis for quick-answer, “ready reference” types of questions, depending on availability of librarians.

Email Reference service
Rudisill Library maintains a Reference email account. In addition, staff members and librarians may receive email reference questions directly.

Staff members and librarians will respond to all initial inquiries within one working day with the response or with confirmation that the inquiry has been received and is being handled.

When a librarian receives an email forwarded from a staff member, the librarian will correspond with the patron within a second working day, either providing the response, requesting the patron to meet with him or her, or making other arrangements to fulfill the patron’s request.

Due to staff and time constraints, Rudisill Library is unable to provide e-mail reference service to community patrons or to alumni of the College.
Chat Reference
Rudisill Library provides reference services through a chat service. Librarians are scheduled to monitor the service throughout the day and evening hours. Librarians are expected to adhere to the schedule and to find a substitute or make other arrangements when they cannot be available.

Because this service is provided statewide, librarians may be answering queries from patrons who are not normally within the Lenoir-Rhyne community. Librarians are expected to provide chat reference service consistent with "ready reference" standards. They may forward questions requiring lengthy responses to the patron's home library.

Procedure Required to Implement Policy
As outlined in the “Policy” section

Name and Title of Policy Author
Rita Dursi Johnson, Dean of University Library Services

Listing of Affected Individuals (as needed)

Reviewed by/Concurrence from
Larry M. Hall, University Provost

Signature of the Individual(s) Approving the Policy

____________________________________  ______________________________
Approved By (signature)  Approval Date

____________________________________  ______________________________
Approved By (signature)  Approval Date

Developed / Revised or Reviewed
September 2011 / August 2013 / July 2017