



Benedictine University Library

OFFICE:	Benedictine University Library	DEPARTMENT:	Public Services
DATE:	Last revised December 2022		
CATEGORY:	Policy		
SUBJECT:	Research and Reference Services Policy		

RESEARCH AND REFERENCE SERVICES POLICY

Statement on Mission

The Benedictine University Library Research and Reference Policy reflects the mission of the Benedictine University Library (“The Library”) as stated in the Benedictine University Library’s Mission and Vision Statements. <https://ben.edu/library/about/>

Purpose and Goals of Library Research and Reference Services

The primary purpose of providing research and reference services to the University community is to support the curriculum needs of students and faculty by providing relevant, diverse, and accessible resources to support their research needs. The Benedictine University Library will offer research assistance to all users, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or age.

The Benedictine University Library will, to the best of their ability, provide accurate and relevant answers to all research questions. Research inquiries will be kept confidential, and Library staff will be impartial in interactions with users in any Library environment, including online spaces. The Library adheres to the “[Code of Ethics](#),” “[The Freedom to Read Statement](#),” and the “[Library Bill of Rights](#)” of the American Library Association.

- Library staff who are committed to providing accurate, up-to-date answers to questions, will be available either at the research desk or on call via virtual reference
- The Library staff will promote the resources and services of the Library.
- The Library staff will provide informal instruction in the use of library resources to all users.
- The Library staff will build a reference collection in accordance with the Benedictine University Library Collection Development Policy to support the University community's needs.

Personnel

During normal semester hours, Library staff will be available to answer reference questions in person, on the phone, via email, or virtual chat at the Research Help Desk on the 2nd floor of the Library.

Library Patrons

- The Benedictine University Library will prioritize current Benedictine University faculty, staff, and students.

- The Benedictine University Library will give secondary priority to people outside the Benedictine University community who request assistance.
- Priority is given to in-person inquiries; however, phone messages, email, text messaging, and online chat messages will be answered promptly.

Research and Reference Services

The Library staff at the Benedictine University Library will:

- Assist users in using the collection, the online catalog, online databases, and the Internet.
- Assist in formulating effective search 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
- Refer to other libraries for additional information

The Library staff at the Benedictine University Library will not:

- Give out advice (e.g., legal, medical, psychological, religious, or tax, etc.)
- Conduct patent, trademark, or legal research for users
- Give out personal telephone numbers and addresses (some exceptions for Online Courses)
- Proctor tests

Research Consultations

Research consultations are available at the Benedictine University Library to current faculty, staff, and students at Benedictine University. Research consultations are scheduled in advance to ensure 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 University Library's resources, the user or inquiry may be referred to another library or source.

Reference Evaluation

Evaluation of the Benedictine University Library's research 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 research section is serving the University's constituents
3. Review of measures to improve the service
4. Discussion and implementation of new methods to improve research services.
5. Evaluation of the reference collection as determined by the Reference Collection Development Policy.

Reference Collection

Reference Collection Development Policy

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 segments of information. They are separated from the circulating

collection because allowing 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.

The nature and format of the information, and how Library staff anticipates the Library's users' utilization of the materials inform whether items will be placed in the reference collection. Interests and needs of the Benedictine University community—primarily students, faculty, administrators, and staff are the basis of selection.

The reference selection policy is to acquire and retain works representing the most current information in the field. The collection will be kept up to date by the acquisition of new materials and the de-accession of outdated materials. Standard reference works of historical and scholarly importance are selectively retained. The collection will include basic introductory reference sources, which provide a general overview of most subject areas taught at the University.

The reference collection includes titles in various formats including print, microfilm, and electronically delivered materials (e.g., available over the Internet or from commercial vendors). Availability, ease of use, cost, timeliness, space, and equipment requirements, as well as preservation issues, are considered in selecting the format for specific reference works.

Print Reference Collection

Materials housed in the print reference collection and denoted by the "REF" on the call number label do not circulate, **except to faculty**, and then only with the permission of a Library staff member. 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 Reference Resources

Electronic reference resources made available by the Library are for use by current Benedictine University students, faculty, and staff and on-site users. Off-campus access to library electronic reference resources is limited to current Benedictine University students, faculty, and staff.