

Reference Unit Policies

The primary objective of the Reference Unit is to provide information and services to support the academic and research needs of CWU students, faculty, and staff, as well as to the general public. Reference staff assists patrons in the location, use, and understanding of information resources, teaches effective search techniques, and trains in the use of library resources. Whenever possible reference staff will not only provide information and answers but will assist patrons to research independently.

Library Users

Our primary patrons are the university's students, faculty, and staff; and all are entitled to the same high level of service. Services and facilities are available to the general public, though current members of the university may be given priority in the use of any service or reference tool.

Reference Services

Reference services include, but are not limited to, answering directional and general information questions, providing instruction in the use of library resources, assisting with the use of reference material, creating and maintaining a collection of reference material.

Services are provided **in person** at the reference desk, and by **telephone, email, and chat**. Users may also make an appointment for a **consultation** with a librarian.

- **In-person** reference services are provided at the reference desk all hours that the library is open. As a general rule, service to patrons who come to the reference area takes priority over any other activity. Reference personnel scheduled to staff the reference desk should be available at all times to provide service. Reference personnel are expected to assist patrons when scheduled on the desk, as well as, providing backup assistance if there are more than three patrons queued for assistance.
- **Telephone** patrons are next in priority, but should be afforded the same attention to detail and courtesy. Telephone questions are answered as soon as possible but do not take precedence over patrons waiting at the reference desk. Callers requiring extensive or time-consuming assistance are helped if there are no in-person patrons waiting; otherwise reference personnel will offer to call the patron back or suggest that the patron come to the library in-person.
- **E-mail** questions usually have a 24-hour turnaround time.
- **Chat** service is provided during limited hours. Generally our live hours are Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. During times that the chat service is offline, patrons may leave a message with their questions and their contact information so that we may respond to them as soon as possible.
- **Individual Reference Consultations** are offered by appointment to assist researchers with in-depth projects.

Suggestions Or Concerns

Feedback regarding Reference service and Reference policies should be directed to the Coordinator of Reference Services.

Circulation Of Materials

Reference materials do not circulate. Any questions or exceptions regarding this should be referred to the Coordinator of Reference Services.

