

Reference Services Policy Statement

Updated September 2021

1. Service Philosophy

The mission of the Beryl Ivey Library states:

The Beryl Ivey Library is an essential academic partner that uses evidence-based practices to provide services that foster life-long learning, information literacy, and an environment that educates women to think critically and participate actively in society.

As a learning destination of choice, the Beryl Ivey Library is an essential part of the Brescia community and the broader library community. We act as a catalyst for learning, growth, and success. In the student-centered environment of the library, we as team members play a vital role as educators in a manner that is approachable, respectful, and sensitive to the needs of our students.

Reference service at the Beryl Ivey Library is one of the most vital and visible expressions of the Library's purpose, mission, and values. It is key to the Library's service roles: to serve as a centre for information, formal education, research, and independent learning. Our reference services contribute to and support the teaching, research, and learning of the Brescia University College community. With each interaction, we seek to foster life-long learning and encourage patrons to become independent, critical thinkers¹.

2. Purpose of this Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy statement is to provide the Library staff with a compendium of information policies that promote a uniform standard of service of the highest possible quality consistent with available resources.

The statement is designed to orient new Library staff members, be an information resource for all library staff, and to provide information to any library patron if they have a question concerning the service policy of the Library.

The Learning & Curriculum Support Librarian will endeavor to review the statement annually for currency, accuracy and completeness. Individual changes will be made throughout the year as needs arise.

¹ University of Waterloo Libraries, "Guidelines and Procedures for the Delivery of Information Services".

3. Position Statements

The Library subscribes to the Ontario Library Association's Statement on Intellectual Freedom and The Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries. The Library incorporates the American Library Association's Professional Competencies for Reference and User Services Librarians and Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers.

As our Reference Services focus on instruction, the Beryl Ivey Library team uses the ACRL Information Literacy Framework to encourage students to evaluate their own ability to identify and locate appropriate sources in multiple contexts, and use information ethically.

4. Goal of Reference Services

The general service goal of the Beryl Ivey Library's Reference Service is to meet the information and research needs of library users by accurately, efficiently, and pleasantly helping patrons with research, teaching, and learning. Library services are offered primarily to students, faculty, and staff, and focus on instruction so that patrons may become more independent in their use of information resources².

5. Specific Objectives of Reference Services

1. It is the policy of the Library to consider each individual information query to be of equal merit. The Library's intention is to accord equal attention and effort to each inquiry, although the time spent by library staff on questions may vary in response to the perceived needs of the patron, the information resources (both library staff and collections) available and the method of receipt of the inquiry. There are some limits to service for non-university patrons (see appropriate section below).
2. To maintain an up-to-date, relevant, and readily accessible working collection of reference materials (electronic and paper) relating primarily to the University's programs. The reference collection includes general and research-oriented dictionaries, encyclopedias, bibliographies, indexes, directories, course readings, and handbooks.
3. To give appropriate reference assistance to the Library's clientele in real-time (i.e., telephone, in-person, video call). In helping patrons, the library staff determine the need of the patron, the exact information requested, and try to find sources appropriate to the level of knowledge and interest of the patron. This service is provided regardless of how the patron contacted the library.
4. To provide instruction in appropriate research methodologies or approaches when needed.
5. To provide access to remote bibliographic and full-text databases, and other online resources.
6. To actively publicize the scope, nature, and availability of the information services we offer. We shall employ those media most effective in reaching our entire clientele or selected segments of that clientele.
7. To facilitate access to library materials which are not available in the Beryl Ivey Library.

² Western Libraries Reference Services Policy

8. To create an environment for and a tradition of good service within the Library, by promoting the effective utilization of the Library staff and materials at our disposal, and to provide high-quality remote services.
9. To cooperate with other libraries to provide the information requested by patrons.

6. Service to Non-University Patrons

Access to hard-copy collections will be available to all who require it, whether or not they are members of the College community. Access to electronic databases, indices, etc. (whether provided by Brescia, Western or another Affiliated University College) is limited to the users specified in the licensing agreements of each resource.

Non-University patrons may be eligible, at no cost, for a Guest Borrower Card that will allow them to borrow material from the Affiliated University College Libraries.

No distinction is made between University and non-University patrons when giving routine reference service, but priority will be given to Brescia University College patrons if funding, space, or staffing is inadequate to meet demands for reference service either at any given time or over a prolonged time.

As a general rule, patrons with time-consuming inquiries who are not affiliated with the University, may be referred to public libraries or their own organizations, if appropriate. In cases where the Beryl Ivey Library has special resources in staff or materials and the needs of the user seem to warrant it, assistance beyond the routine may be given.

7. Accessibility

It is the mission of the Beryl Ivey Library to provide equal access to information to all who request it. The library will provide appropriate support to ensure accessibility for all patrons, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Brescia University College is committed to recognizing the dignity and independence of all staff, students, faculty, and visitors and seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities have genuine, open, and unhindered access to University goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises.

8. Types of Reference Service

Reference services may be delivered in any of the following ways:

1. In-person, by appointment or at the service desk
2. Video call, by appointment
3. Phone call, by appointment or impromptu
4. Email
5. Social media interaction
6. Ask a Librarian live chat virtual reference

Library reference service includes, but is not limited to, assistance with the following:

1. Assistance in finding the answer to specific reference questions.
2. Assistance in developing research strategies for reports, term papers, theses, and dissertations.
3. Instruction in the use of the Library and its resources.
4. Verification of Library holdings and referral to institutions which have materials that this Library does not hold.
5. Orientation to the Library through tours, tutorial sessions, subject specific workshops, etc.
6. Compilation and production of various instructional aids.
7. In-depth reference appointments for patrons engaged in research based endeavors.

Virtual Reference

The Beryl Ivey Library offers in-depth virtual reference services by appointment. As with an in-person appointment, the consultation will be set by the librarian and patron for a mutually agreed upon time. The librarian will send an appointment link to the patron through the chosen video conferencing software (e.g. Zoom, Teams) in advance of the consultation.

The Library also participates with Western Libraries in a consortial virtual reference (chat) service as part of the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL). This service, known as Ask a Librarian, allows users to contact Librarians with their questions via online chat. For Privacy considerations related to Ask a Librarian, please refer to Section 12. Privacy.

9. Restrictions of Reference Service

Interpretation of Material

Library staff do not interpret information, such as legal, medical, financial, statistical information or class assignments.

Recommendations Regarding Library Patrons' Purchases of Sources

Library staff refer patrons to standard reviews of the work in question and advise the patron to examine the library copy, if available; generally, library staff members do not make recommendations regarding such purchases.

Appraisal of Books and Artifacts

Library staff do not appraise the private property of patrons. Patrons are advised to consult a professional appraiser, but specific appraisers are not recommended.

Genealogical Questions

Genealogical searches are not undertaken by library staff. Catalogue assistance and help locating standard reference sources are offered. Genealogical questions generally are referred to the Public Archives of Ontario and the London Public Library.

Bibliographies & Proof Reading

The library staff do not compile or check bibliographies or proof read documents. Library staff do assist patrons in the use of bibliographical tools.

10. Library Instruction and Information Literacy

Information literacy (IL) is a set of practices that enable students to actively participate in the academic community, act as an authority on a topic, and engage in lifelong learning. At Brescia University College, information literacy and reference services fall under one of Brescia's Seven Competencies: Inquiry and Analysis. In reference consultations and in-class instruction sessions, librarians teach information literacy skills and practices.

To be information literate, students are able to:

- Understand the scope of their informational needs
- Evaluate their ability to identify and locate appropriate resources
- Ethically use information
- Critically evaluate and analyze information

11. Collection

Interlibrary Loan

Primary users (registered students, faculty, and staff at Brescia, Western & Affiliated University Colleges) can request material from other Omni Ontario University Libraries directly through the Omni search tool.

Additionally, the Interlibrary Loans (ILL) service supplements the resources available at the Beryl Ivey Library and through affiliated Library locations by borrowing or obtaining materials from other libraries. The service is available for primary users.

12. Privacy

The Beryl Ivey Library is committed to protecting the privacy of the personal information of its patrons. Data may be collected in order to provide reference and/or research assistance, but will not be shared. For further information, please refer to Brescia University College's Privacy Policy.

Ask a Librarian Chat³

The Beryl Ivey Library participates with Western Libraries in Ask-a-Librarian, a consortial virtual reference (chat) service, as part of the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL). Ask-A-Librarian only requires that users provide their status (i.e. undergraduate, graduate) and university affiliation. You can find the Privacy Policy for Ask a Librarian here: <http://chat.scholarsportal.info/privacy.html>. Ask a Librarian provides OCUL with a transcript for each chat session.

A copy of this transcript may also be emailed to the patron at the completion of the session on request. These transcripts may be used to evaluate and improve the service. Transcripts are deleted after a thirteen-month period. Transcripts collected using Ask a Librarian will be kept confidential and will only

³ Western Libraries Reference Services Policy

be accessible to OCUL Ask a Librarian administrative staff as well as the Assessment Librarian and Virtual Reference Coordinator for Western Libraries. Should a user of Ask a Librarian wish to have their chat transcript deleted they may do so by contacting the Virtual Reference Coordinator. Please provide the date and time of your chat in order to have it removed from the system.