Reference Orientation
Reference
Guidelines and General Reference Practices

Generally held beliefs:
1. Reference is an extension of instruction. Teaching the student how to find the answer is equally important as successfully locating resources.
2. Answers are not generally given, unless the question is very specific, i.e. an address, a phone number, an isbn.

Help Desk vs. Consultation Desk Activities vs. Subject Specialists
The Help Desk is staffed by staff and students from the hours of 8am to midnight. Its purpose is to answer short reference and directional questions and to refer longer and more complicated questions to the Consultation Desk. Generally questions about printing problems and frozen computers can be directed to the Help Desk. (Although Consultation librarians are expected to do troubleshooting as needed and should know the basics.) Very complicated questions may need the assistance of subject specialist librarians. Consultation Librarians are encouraged to refer students to the subject specialist, whenever they feel it is necessary. See the list of subject specialists and methods of contact: http://www.lib.MUOhio.Edu/libinfo/directory/contact/.

Librarians have different styles of reference. However, it’s expected that, occasionally during your shift, you will walk around, reset computers, and politely inquire if anyone needs help. Common and unobtrusive questions to ask include: Are you finding what you need? Can I be of any assistance? If you need help let me know (and point out your location).

Reference Points: The library system has 5 libraries, each with their own reference service. In addition, the libraries have local email and chat reference services as well as providing chat reference service through OhioLINK. For other library hours and contact points see: http://www.lib.MUOhio.Edu/libinfo/hours/

For connections to the local chat and email services see: http://www.lib.MUOhio.Edu/libinfo/ask_new.html

For connections to the OhioLINK service, see the Help button linked in the databases provided by OhioLINK. This links users to both the local chat and email reference options available from Miami, as well as to the OhioLINK Chat Reference Service. As a new addition to the professional staff, you can participate in answering both the local Chat Reference queries and also participate in the OhioLINK Service. For the OhioLINK Chat Reference service, you will need to download software onto your computer. For both the OhioLINK and our local Chat Reference, you will need a password/access code. Talk to Belinda Barr about participating in both service options.

07/08/2003
**Commonly Asked Questions**: Questions that occur frequently and require a significant amount of work, that are rather difficult, or might involve more than one library are posted (with answers) on Forum. See: http://www.lib.muohio.edu/mstaff/forum/.

(Located on the staff page, towards the bottom, select Public Services, then “Consultation Question Forum”). Ask Belinda Barr for the login and password for the Mstaff page if you don’t know it.

**Schedule**: Librarians typically work 4-12 hours per week at the Consultation Desk when school is in session. During the school year, the Consultation Desk is staffed from 8am to 10pm. From 8am to 10am, consultation is “on call”. The librarian for that shift should get the pager when they arrive in the morning so that they can be paged by the Help Desk if a librarian is needed. The pager is kept in the top left drawer of the metal file cabinet in the Consultation Area. The keys to the filing cabinet are in the small box on the second shelf of the bookcase on the left-hand side of the Consultation Area (as you face the file cabinet).

From 10am to 10pm, the librarians on the schedule for that day sit at the consultation desk. Hours are set for the semester. Most shifts are 2 hours in length, except for evening shifts which are 3 _ hours (6:30-10pm). In addition, librarians share weekend hours, staffing the desk from 1-5 on Saturday and 1-10 on Sunday, with time off for dinner. The average for many librarians is 3 Saturdays and 3 Sundays per semester. In the summer, the librarians are typically “on call”, using the pager. Typically there are 2 shifts per day 8am-1pm and 1pm-5pm. There is also an evening shift Monday through Thursday from 6-9pm. Summer weekend hours are Saturday and Sunday 1-5. On the weekends, evenings, and Friday afternoons during the Summer, there are no Help Desk personnel scheduled, so the librarian on duty at these times sits at the Help Desk.

If you are unable to work at a scheduled time and you know in advance, please try and switch shifts or arrange a trade with another librarian to cover your time. Once you have worked out a solution, please email the change to Kris Abney so that she can make the change in the IS schedule on MeetingMaker. If you are ill or have an emergency, please contact Kris Abney (529-3938) to let her know that you will be unable to cover your shift.

**What is in the Consultation Area**:

- Manuals for Reference CD ROMs and other databases
- CD ROMs (in top right metal file drawer)
- New books
- Pagers (in top left metal file drawer)
- Supplies in wood rolling cabinet
- Local maps in wood rolling cabinet
- Folders, above desk (Passwords folder, statistics sheets, Government Documents circulation, misc. info.)
- A few Ready Reference items
- Duplicate handouts (bottom right metal file drawer)
Reference Policies and Procedures

Keeping Statistics: On a clipboard in the Consultation Area are statistics sheets to record questions received during your desk shift. If you are the first person on the desk for the day, you will need to change the statistics sheet. The sheets are double sided, so turn it over or get a new sheet from the folder above the right hand desk as you face the back of the Consultation Area.

There are three basic categories of statistics:
- Directional: Where is something, i.e.: a call number, a room, etc.
- Reference: Basic questions – facts, how to begin a research paper, industry and company information.
- Search: In-depth questions that take more than 10 minutes to answer or require a special level of skill or knowledge
- Chat: Questions that come in on the chat reference service

Circulation of Materials: Generally reference materials DO NOT circulate, to anyone. Exceptions include needing to take an item to audio visual for certain production techniques not available in the Center for Information Management, or a faculty member needing to show a title to their class. Loans are usually given in terms of hours and generally are not longer than one day. Certain materials are used heavily and should not be checked out AT ALL, unless the selector in that area has given permission.

Journals (which circulate to faculty and graduate students only) and Corporate (annual) Reports can be checked out at the Circulation Desk. To check out a reference item, you can either fill out a Special Loan pass, located in the drawers under the consultation desk or take the item with the person to the Circulation desk and let them know the person has permission to check out the material for a specific time period. If you fill out the Loan Pass, however, tell the patron to ask the Circulation Staff to desensitize the item so that it will not set off the theft detection system at the door.

Missing Books and Pages:
- Missing Books: Occasionally, patrons will be unable to find a book. First, look the book up in the catalog and make sure it isn’t in a special area of King (i.e. reference, leisure reading, folios, government and & law, etc.) or at another library, or already checked out. Also, make sure they were looking on the second or third floors (not in the King Reference area) for the title. If it appears that they have looked in the correct area, suggest that they look at the reshelving area on the second floor. Depending on how busy it is, it can be helpful to go with the patron and look yourself, both in the reshelving area and in the area where the book should be. Often patrons are not familiar with LC call numbers and misread them, so they are not looking in the correct section, even if they think they are.

If the book still appears to be missing, go into the TELNET version of the online catalog and look up the missing title by CALL NUMBER. (There is a link to the Telnet version of the catalog under the main catalog home page.)

07/08/2003
Very rarely, books without barcodes may be checked out “on the fly” and call numbers and bib records will not be connected. While you are in the Telnet catalog, hit the shift and * keys simultaneously. This will take you into the Technical Mode and allow you to look at the item record to find out the last time the book was checked in or if it is currently checked out.

If all of these activities fail to produce the item, have the patron fill out a missing book form at the Help Desk. Once an item is declared “on search” in the catalog, the patron can order it through OhioLINK.

Missing and Torn out Pages: Insert a piece of scrap paper in the spot where the pages are missing. Take journals and circulating books to the Stacks Maintenance Office and reference materials to the Information Services Office. The patron can ask for a copy through ILL (http://www.lib.muohio.edu/ill/original/main.php). Make sure that the patron states that the pages are missing on the ILL form. Note that we do NOT replace pages for journals that are also available on microform such as Time and Newsweek, etc. In that case, do nothing with the journal and advise the patron to use the microfilm edition or check online databases such as Academic Search Premier to see if the article is available full-text online.

Emergency Procedures: Generally, the emergency procedures are simple. If the building is evacuated, you go! Circulation takes care of everything, announcements, etc. The designated staff meeting point is outside of Bishop Hall, it’s the first building to the right of the library if you go out the front door. Look for the group. In case of other emergencies, follow the directions of the Circulation staff.

For criminal and medical activities, if it is a non-emergency, send the patron to Circulation, who will then call the Campus Police. In rare occasions, if you need to contact the Police directly, dial 911. Generally, this would be for medical emergencies where time is a factor. It is always good to alert Circulation so that they can direct emergency personnel when they arrive.

On weekends and nights, if you must contact a supervisor, call Scott Van Dam (523-2410) or Richard Pettit (523-1530).

Contacting OhioLINK and Miami U. Systems: Directions for contacting both Miami U. Libraries Systems Staff and OhioLINK can be found at: http://www.lib.muohio.edu/mstaff/logins.html, towards the middle of the page. For Miami, if you need assistance during office hours on a weekday, call the Systems Department directly (Stan 9-2351. Andy 9-2884). Systems is always willing to help, don’t hesitate to contact them, even weekends and off hours. In some cases, Stan can fix problems, such as with the public printers on the first floor, from home.

Purchasing: Any selector can pay for and designate a book to go into King Reference. When you order the book, just include a note about cataloging it for the King Reference
Collection. If you want to use the funds designated for King Reference, send the purchasing information to the Fund 50 group. If the item is very expensive (in the thousands), also include some rationale for its purchase. The Fund 50 group currently consists of 4 members of the department with broad based subject responsibilities.