



## Reference Services Policy

Reference Services supports the missions and strategic goals of the Kennesaw State University (KSU) Library System and the University as a whole. The mission of the Library System, the needs of the user, and the professional judgment of the reference staff will determine the appropriate level of service.

Since the KSU Library System is a unit of an educational institution, reference services are primarily instructional in nature. Reference staff foster users' information literacy and self-sufficiency by teaching methods and tools of research (both printed and electronic) and evaluation of the quality and relevance of the research material retrieved. Reference services include instruction in the use of bibliographic sources, assistance in developing research strategies, and assistance in identifying, locating, organizing, and retrieving information through all sources.

The KSU Library System provides reference services at both the Kennesaw and Marietta campuses. Reference services may be provided via the Help Desk, by appointment, by telephone, by email, through the FAQ database, through chat services, or other information delivery options. In the event of an unexpected closure, reference services will continue to be provided, when possible, via chat, email, through the FAQ database and by virtual appointment.

Reference staff will provide complete, accurate, and timely information in response to all questions. In most cases an "answer" will take the form of instruction in the use of research materials. These interactions will usually be between 5-15 minutes in length. If additional help is needed, patrons may be advised to make a research appointment. For more information on the research services offered at KSU please see the [Research Help](#) page.

**Code of Ethics** - All reference transactions between library staff and users, regardless of whether they take place at a formal service point or in some other context, will be governed by the standards articulated in the [Code of Ethics of the American Library Association](#).

Revised by Mary Margaret Cornwell, Acting Reference Services Coordinator, July 26, 2019

Approved by Interim Department Chair of Public Services, August 5, 2019

Amended by Reference Team to include closure statement and approved by Interim Department Chair of Public Services, May 11, 2020

Amended for closure statement and approved May 11, 2020



**Commercial Products and/or Services** - The Library System will not provide recommendations on commercial products and/or services not related to library resources in response to queries but will refer users to sources of information on these topics.

**Competencies** – All staff providing reference services will adhere to the highest standards of knowledge and proficiency possible.

**Electronic Service** - These services—email, chat, etc.—are intended primarily for the students, faculty, staff, and administrators of KSU. Inquiries from non-affiliated users will be answered as time permits and at the discretion of the Reference Services Coordinator. For questions submitted via email, a response will usually be sent within one business day.

**Equity of Service** - Library staff will provide reference services to all users without discrimination based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, KSU status, or disability. Should you require assistance or have further questions about the ADA, please contact:

Student Disability Services (SDS)

- <https://sds.kennesaw.edu/index.php>
- Kennesaw: 470-578-2666
- Marietta: 470-578-7361

**Legal, Medical, Tax, Political, or Personal Advice** - The Library System will not provide legal, medical, tax, political, or personal advice in response to reference queries. Specific information may be read from manuals, but in most circumstances, users will be referred to sources of information from which to draw conclusions.

**Liability** - The Library System assumes no liability for any misinformation and/or interpretations drawn from sources cited in response to queries.

**Patrons** - The primary community served by KSU Library System consists of current students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Kennesaw State University. Outside users are welcome at any KSU Library. Reference services provided by KSU Libraries to non-affiliated users (visitors, other librarians, independent researchers, etc.) do not take the place of services provided by their primary library - whether school, public, academic, or special. KSU alumni and retired KSU employees with active status also receive reference services dependent upon availability. Please see the [Frequent Asked Questions](#) on the library homepage for more information.

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**Telephone Service** – Reference assistance given by telephone will generally be brief. Patrons in need of more extensive assistance may be advised to visit the library, make a personal appointment, or referred to a subject specialist.

**Disclosure** - The Research and Instructional Services Unit reserves the right to revise these policies as required by organizational changes.

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