

 DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY <i>Inspiring Minds</i>	Killam Memorial Library	Policy Number: 5
	Title: Killam Library Service Point Policy	Date Issued: 2013-02-18
		Date Revised: August 20, 2013
	Issued by: Head, Killam Memorial Library	Approved by: University Librarian

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Killam Memorial Library Service Point Policy is to promote a uniform standard of service of the highest possible quality consistent with available resources. The policy is designed to

- orient new staff members
- be an information resource for experienced staff members
- assist library patrons who have questions about the Library's service policy

The Head of the Killam Library will review the statement every two years for currency, accuracy and completeness. Revisions may also be made as the need arises.

2. Definitions

- "Patron" refers to any person using the Library or its services.
- "Staff" refers to library employees providing services to patrons.
- "KLSP" refers to the main service area located in the Lobby of the Killam Library.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The University Librarian is responsible for approving this policy.

The Head of the Killam Library is responsible for updating this policy and ensuring that it is followed.

The Head of Circulation and the Head of the Killam Library are responsible for applying this policy.

The staff members of the Killam Library are responsible for following this policy.

4. Goals of the Information Desk Services

The staff members of the Information Desk offer

- assistance in finding the answer to specific reference questions
- instruction in the use of the Library and its resources
- referral to other library staff members for assistance with complex queries

5. Access to Library Service Point

Services are available to all members of the university community and to members of the public.

5.1. Service to Patrons not affiliated with Dalhousie

No distinction is made between University and non-University patrons when answering routine Information Desk questions.

5.2. Service to Patrons with Disabilities

The mission of Dalhousie University Libraries is to provide equal access to information to all who request it. For those patrons with disabilities, the Library will make special provisions insofar as feasible to permit the patrons to examine sources and conduct research.

6. Guidelines for Providing Service

Staff members are the public face of the Library and work to create a positive impression of the Library. Individual assistance to patrons who come to the Library is the primary responsibility of staff members on desk duty.

Willingness to provide assistance is reflected in the attitude and behaviour of staff members. Desk staff members appear alert, friendly, and interested. Staff members apply well- developed communication skills to ascertain the needs of patrons and are not judgmental regarding a request. Courtesy, patience, sensitivity, and tact are part of all interactions with patrons. Staff members survey the area for patrons who appear to need assistance and offer to help them. Desk staff members on duty wear the appropriate name tag which identifies them by name and role (e.g. Circulation Assistant, Circulation Supervisor, or Reference Intern).

When assisting patrons, staff members:

- use question-negotiation skills to determine exactly what the patron requires
- provide accurate answers to patron's queries
- refer patrons to the Reference and Research Assistance Desk or to specific librarians for assistance with complex reference and research questions
- explain and instruct while assisting patrons
- tactfully recheck catalogues and databases if patrons say they cannot find an item
- consult a colleague for additional assistance whenever necessary.

6.1. Information Desk Service Availability

The service is typically open between 8 am and 8 pm Monday to Wednesday, 10 am and 6 pm Thursday and Friday, and reduced hours on weekends and holidays.

6.2. High Use Periods

If patrons are waiting for assistance, staff members assist patrons in the order in which they have arrived.

6.3. Low Use Periods

During low use periods desk staff members may work on other assigned tasks, examine new reference materials, or read e-mail, or professional literature, as long as these activities do not interfere with the provision of desk service.

6.4. Absences from Service Point

A sign redirecting patrons to another service point is prominently displayed.

6.5. Messages for Staff Members

Messages providing the answers to recurring questions, to difficult questions, or about materials being held for patrons are left for other staff members at the desk.

6.6. Paging Patrons

Library patrons are not paged. Emergencies are referred to Library Administration or Dalhousie Security staff. Emergencies in the evenings and on weekends are referred to the Circulation Supervisor.

6.7. Personal Telephone Calls

Only under exceptional circumstances do staff members make personal telephone calls while on desk duty. Personal calls received while on desk duty are kept as brief as possible.

6.8. Public Use of Library Telephones

The telephones at service points are generally for official Library use only. Patrons are referred to the nearest pay phone but may be permitted to use a desk phone if the need is urgent and university related.

6.9. Patron's Belongings

Staff members do not undertake to look after patrons' personal belongings at a service point or in the Learning Commons.

7. Guidelines for Providing Service by Telephone

The manner in which telephone inquiries are handled has a direct bearing on the public's impression of the Library. Staff members practice high standards of telephone etiquette.

Patrons who are asking for assistance at a service point are given priority over patrons who are asking for assistance by phone.

7.1. Incoming Calls

Unless busy assisting other patrons, staff members are responsible for answering incoming calls received at the Information Desk.

If a call is not answered, it will be forwarded to the Killam Library Administration office. If available, the Library Administrative Secretary will answer forwarded calls and may answer routine questions (i.e., ones relating to hours, library staff and departments). Non-routine questions will be referred to a reference and research librarian.

7.1.1. Answering Calls

Staff members use a pleasing tone of voice and speak clearly and slowly. To ensure that the callers know immediately that they have reached the right department, staff members answer the phone by saying, "Killam Library, How may I help you".

7.1.2. Holding or Calling Back

Staff members do not leave a person holding the line indefinitely while searching for an answer. If a search cannot be done while talking to the patron, staff members transfer calls to the most appropriate service point (e.g. Research Assistance Desk or Circulation).

7.1.3. Making Referrals

Callers may not know the person who can help them and staff members refer callers to the right person by using sources such as the online Campus Directory.

If the information a caller wants can be better provided by another department or library, staff members make sure callers know whom they should consult and the type of service they can expect. If possible, staff members refer callers to a specific person by name and title.

Calls may be transferred but staff members also generally give the number to the caller in case the call is cut off.

7.1.4. Personal Calls

Calls for other members of the Library are referred or transferred and staff members give the correct number to the caller for future use. If the person called is not listed in the Library staff list or the online campus Directory, the call should be referred to Library Administration or to Dalhousie Human Resources.

7.1.5. Emergency or Nuisance Calls

In an emergency situation, such as a bomb threat, staff members try to obtain as much information as possible from the caller and write it down. (See Dalhousie's *Emergency Procedures Manual* kept on the bulletin board in the Circulation Department and in the Information Desk binder.)

Nuisance calls should be dealt with as quickly and unemotionally as possible.

7.2. Outgoing Calls

Staff members generally limit the number of outgoing calls made during a desk shift.

7.2.1. Long Distance Calls

Long distance calls cannot be made from the Information Desk.

Staff members on desk duty answer questions received from patrons calling long distance immediately. If additional information is required, the staff member transfers the call to the most appropriate service point (e.g. Research Assistance Desk or Circulation).

7.3. Limitations on Telephone Reference Questions

Answer all general information calls that can be answered in a few minutes. Lengthy telephone conversations at the desk are to be avoided.

8. Guidelines for Handling Patron Complaints

Occasionally Library staff members will encounter patrons who are unhappy with the services the Library can provide. As a result all staff members need to be familiar with, understand, and be able to explain Library rules, regulations, policies, and practices.

When a patron has a complaint, staff members will:

- remain calm and polite and listen to the complaint
- explain the reason for the policy and the need to apply it consistently
- refer the individual to the Head of the Killam Library or other appropriate Library staff member if the complaint cannot be resolved

9. Information Desk Statistics

The measurement of services is the responsibility of the staff members and Library Administration. In order to have a basis for the review of library services, staff members keep daily statistics on queries.

9.1. Query Definitions

The following types of queries are recorded:

- Directional Questions: quick, specific "Where is? " (e.g. library service, reference tools, physical location)
- Quick Reference: questions answered quickly, using known source (e.g. library catalogue or *APA Style Guide*) taking less than 5 minutes.
- Teaching: questions answered by showing a patron how to use a Library resource taking less than 5 minutes.
- Referrals: questions needing specialized help better given by another person or department (e.g. Tech Help Desk, Circulation).

9.2. Statistics Gathering

Staff members are responsible for accurately recording the number and type of queries received by marking the appropriate section of the daily statistics form.

10. Related Policies

- [Killam Memorial Library Research and Reference Services Policy](#)
- [Killam Library Code of Conduct](#)