

University of Maine at Fort Kent
Administrative Policy Creation/Modification Form

Administrative Policy Type:	Academic Affairs Information Services
Initiating Department:	Library
Action Taken:	Existing Policy
Policy Title:	Library Electronic Reference
Date of Policy Development:	2008 (reviewed)
Date of Policy Implementation:	Immediately (moved into new template)
Next Policy Review Date:	Ongoing
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Stated Policy:

Purpose: To outline the goals, objectives, and scope of the Blake Library Electronic Reference Service.

(Adapted from "The New York Public Library - Ask Librarians Online" pages)

Overview

I. Introduction

Blake Library's Ask-A-Librarian service allows the university and community patrons to obtain help from a librarian through either the chat service or email service. It is the library staff's intention to help guide users in the quest for information and independent use of research methods.

II. Description of Services

A. Live Mode: This service is similar to a chat session, which allows a patron and librarian to talk live. Live mode is especially helpful to patrons who wish to get instruction on how to use a service and only have one telephone line. Reference staff are able to instruct the patron while he/she is still connected to the Internet.

B. Email Mode: This service allows patrons to send reference staff their question via email. The email mode is helpful to patrons when the live mode is unavailable or if the question is a more lengthy research question. A reply may only acknowledge receipt of the email. A full answer to a question may come later.

III. Who can use the service

Both the live and email modes of Ask-A-Librarian are available to the University of Maine at Fort Kent community, the Valley community, and UMFK's distance learners. All others may be referred to the patron's local library if reference staff is unable to answer the question.

IV. Types of questions answered through both modes

- A. Ready reference (quick research and answer).
- B. Instruction in the use of our online catalog and our indexes and databases.
- C. More in depth questions are handled through email mode only.

V. What is not answered through either mode

- A. Medical or law related advice
- B. Product evaluations, appraisals, etc.
- C. Any other question asking for personal advice or opinions.
- D. Non-reference related questions. These questions will be routed to the appropriate department.

VI. Days and Times of Service

Live Mode: Available hours are typically the same during the fall and spring semester. Hours may change according to need. Service will not be available during holidays, school closings, or other circumstances the library staff determines necessary. Evening hours will be available during fall and spring semesters only. Refer to the Ask-the-Librarian page for a current schedule.