

## **Library Reference Service**

### **Philosophy of Reference Service**

Athens State University is committed to the provision of high quality, individualized reference service to any Library user who needs assistance. As affirmed in the American Library Association's Bill of Rights, assistance will "not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The Library mission statement emphasizes the obligation to provide access to information and research and the encouragement of research and lifelong learning.

The Library provides users with helpful and timely reference assistance via in-person, telephone, email, and the SpringShare LibAnswers platform. The uses a one desk service model that is staffed by students, staff and librarians. Students assist in-person and telephone requests dealing with directions and easily answered queries. They also provide support for copying and supplies. Librarians handle all email requests. Virtual Information queries are managed through a tiered services which progress up to consultations with librarians. A trained staff member or librarian is on duty during all hours of Library operation (services close 15 minutes before building shutdown). All information requests receive a prompt, accurate, efficient, thorough, and courteous response. Information may range from simple ready reference or practical answers to more complex strategies requiring significant research. Each individual asking a question will receive respect and a thorough, attentive response.

Reference service is extended beyond the immediate Athens State user population to students and faculty of other institutions, as well as to the broader community. The Library strives to provide quality service to all users, whether requests are made face-to-face, by telephone, through e-mail or via chat. During Library non-operating hours, responses to all e-mail and chat requests will be provided on the next business day.

Since the Library is part of an educational institution, reference service is instructional in nature. An important role of the library staff is to help students gain confidence and skills in using research tools, a better understanding of disciplinary criteria, and a sense of how scholars use resources in their research. Librarians focus on cultivating self-sufficiency and lifelong learning among the user population. Reference librarians seek to teach users about efficient, effective information-seeking strategies and the use of quality, relevant resource material, rather than simply locating the answer. Librarians will not complete student assignments or write research papers for students.

As stated in the Library's Privacy Procedures, the confidentiality of users' queries is respected. Discussion among library personnel may on occasion be appropriate when it is known that a librarian not on duty has particular expertise, or when the question and its answer might be instructive for other librarians to perform duties capably.

### **Limitations of Reference Service**

- Serving the needs of current Athens State University students and faculty are the priority for reference services.
- Consultations are sometimes required due to the time constraints of the librarians, complexity of the question and needs of the users.



- The Library is not equipped to handle most questions of a genealogical nature. Usually, these requests are referred to a local archive or public library.
- The Library has limited medical and legal resources. Many questions of this nature may be referred to a local medical or law library. Reference assistance at Athens State University does not include giving legal or medical advice or opinions