

Policy - Circulation of Materials Designated as Reference and General Collection Non-Circulating Policy

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Reference materials by their nature are commonly used to retrieve relatively short, specific pieces of information, rather than to be read cover-to-cover. The primary purpose of having a reference collection is to make such convenient sources of specific information readily available when needed by library patrons and by library personnel assisting patrons and carrying out other library operations. Non-circulating items in the General Collection have been designated as such in order to insure that they are available when needed by library patrons; the majority of these items are reference materials. For these reasons, reference materials and those designated as non-circulating, generally **do not circulate**. Any decision to allow a reference or non-circulating book to circulate is an **exception** to customary policy, and as such, should be made only in circumstances that warrant such an exception.

The decision to circulate a reference or non-circulating item is made according to the professional expertise of a librarian working at the reference desk. If the item is allowed to circulate, it will be authorized for a checkout period of no more than 3 hours. Only the appropriate subject librarian(s) or head of collection development can authorize a checkout period of more than 3 hours. If the subject librarian or head of collection development is not available to make this determination, for example on nights and weekends, a checkout period of greater than 3 hours will not be authorized.

In deciding whether or not to make an exception and allow a reference or non-circulating book to circulate, consideration will be given to faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduate students, in that order. In addition, the following criteria will be considered:

- Can the patron's information need be met by an item in the circulating collection, such as a different book on the topic, a circulating dictionary, or a superseded edition of the same item?
- Can the need be met by an Internet site or library database?
- Is this a standard reference item that does or is likely to receive frequent or regular use and if so, should remain in the library?
- Is the item part of a set, and if removed, would negate the usefulness of the remaining items in the set?

- Is the item needed for a class assignment, so that others are likely to need the item?

Drafted by Collection Development Officer. Discussed and approved by Public Services 01/10/06. Approved by LibAdmin 01/24/06. Approved by LAC 02/16/06