

BLIS semester II  
(paper – 5)  
Reference Sources & Services  
Topic – **Reference Department in Library**  
e-content

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## **Reference Department in Library**

Library is a place where thousands of information is stored from various forms such as books, newspapers, magazines, thesis, media and others. In an academic institution, normally students will go the library to get all the information that they need to fulfill the requirement needed in order to complete their assignment and thesis. However, not all the students know how to find the right, accurate and reliable information in the library. Some of the student assumes that they can find the right information directly through the internet. What they do not know is that, library is where they can get access to sources of information that are reliable, accurate and interesting. Library also stores information that is rare and cannot be found anywhere else.

Some of the users do not or shy to ask for helps from the librarians to find the books or any other materials that they want in the library. It is important for the students to refer to the

reference department in the progress of completing their assignment. So, this is where the roles of reference librarians should be fully utilize. Reference librarians will help the student to locate the information that they need faster and in the right way. Some of the task and services provided by the librarian in the reference department are:

### **1) Teach patrons on how to use the library catalogue**

Reference librarian can teach the students and user on how to use the library catalogue or recommend the proper keywords or subject that are used in the library catalogue for the topic that the user wants.

### **2) Help patrons find books on shelves**

Librarians are able to help user to go directly to the shelves with books on a certain topic without using the catalogue. By this kind of method, patrons can save time in finding the information that they need.

### **3) Recommend books to patrons**

Reference librarian must truly familiar with the library collection. As so, the librarian can recommend books that might contain the answer to particular questions as the librarian already familiar with the contents of hundreds of reference books.

### **4) Teach user to use online database**

The librarian can teach the library user to use online databases such as magazine and newspaper articles, and recommend words and search strategies for the topic the user has in mind.

## **5) Advice on searching information.**

The librarian can recommend reliable web sites, give advice on searching the Internet for information, and evaluate the reliability of the information on web sites. As so, users can gain access to information that is reliable and accurate.

These are some of the services and activities done in the reference department. All of these services are very beneficial to the users especially to the students in completing their assignments. Some might say that coming to the library is such a waste of time. Some of them are very shy and afraid to approach the librarian at the library to ask questions and help. With the technology available that are growing widely from time to time, we are able to reach the library virtually without needing us to go to the library physically. Virtual reference services enable the user to reach the librarian through the internet and ask questions to get the information that they need. It saves time, cost and help the user especially the students to complete their assignment on time.

As a conclusion, reference department is one of the core departments in the library. It is the place where the user comes and asks for help in obtaining the information that they need as well as gaining skills in searching the accurate and reliable information. Students should first come to the reference department whenever they are facing some difficulties in finding the information that they need. It is not a waste for the students to come to the reference department in searching for information as they might get new skills in finding the information from a variety of sources. Reference department is like a map to the library.

## **Role of Reference Department**

The role of the Reference Department is to support the academic mission of the University in three broad and distinct areas:

**1) Instruction;**

**2) Research; and**

**3) Public/Community Service.**

Familiarity and ongoing involvement in each area is expected, and is necessary to fill this mandate.

Of primary importance is support of the University's academic programs, a mission which involves meeting the general and specific needs of students, faculty, staff, and administrators of the University. As a state institution, a secondary mission is the provision of information services as requested by state residents, other academic and public libraries, and other public/ private institutions.

As an extension of the classroom, the Reference Department provides instruction at all levels of need through the following: interpretation of the library collections to users; research and research assistance.