Drake University Law Library Reference Policy

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Definition of Reference

Reference services include, but are not limited to: directing users to specific locations in the library, assisting patrons in locating and evaluating specific information resources, instructing individual patrons in the selection and use of appropriate tools and techniques for finding information, and preparing research guides. Reference services are provided to law students, other Drake students, faculty, attorneys, members of the Drake Law Library Association, and community members.

Hours

Current reference hours are posted on the library's Ask a Librarian web page.

General Reference Service

During all library hours, staff members are available at the Information Desk to answer questions about the library and help locate library materials. Questions that cannot be answered by Information Desk staff are referred to a reference librarian.

The Law Library provides reference assistance to help in doing research, in identifying particular publications, and in using specific materials. Reference librarians may:

- help identify and locate needed legal materials
- explain the variety and use of legal resources and reference tools, including the library catalog, periodical indexes, computer databases, and the Internet
- suggest sources of information
- find facts such as names, addresses, and phone numbers
- suggest research strategies
- refer patrons to other libraries or institutions when Drake does not have what is needed.

Reference librarians and other library staff cannot:

- give legal advice or opinions
- provide interpretations of statutes, court decisions, or other primary or secondary authority
- perform legal research for public patrons.

Every effort is made to provide the services of a reference librarian during peak library usage hours. Telephone reference services are also available, but are generally limited to answering questions which can be quickly and easily determined, e.g. the verification of citations, whether

a particular publication is held by the library, or whether a particular case is in a reporter. See the library's Ask a Librarian page for details and contact information.

Reference librarians are available to assist faculty members with literature searches. However, because of time and staffing constraints, librarians are generally not able to provide extensive analysis of the citations or sources located but can be a resource in helping train Research Assistants to do so. Librarians are able to produce library guides to correspond with needs for subject-specific class research and instruct students in research strategies. However, the production of annotated bibliographies, legal memoranda, briefs, etc. is a task best undertaken by RAs.

Limitations on Reference Service

While reference librarians attempt to be of service to all library users, some limitations may be imposed on the amount of assistance to users not affiliated with Drake University. Providing service to Drake students and faculty is the top priority. Therefore, at periods of high demand in the public services area, the reference librarian on duty may postpone or reschedule assisting a non-Drake user of the Law Library.