Guideline 203 - Client Service and Referral

The Library & Gallery is committed to providing a wide range of services and information for the University and community constituents. This entails a moderately complex, specialized division of information and expertise throughout the Library & Gallery's departments and subunits.

In order to provide excellence in services and information for those we serve, (internal and external clients), it is the Library & Gallery’s objective to minimize potential client confusion or effort and to maximize client confidence in the department’s ability to provide excellent, accurate information and services. To this end, all staff and student assistants are expected to:

Gain a basic understanding of the Library & Gallery's organization and division of information and expertise, as well as gain basic familiarity with the Library & Gallery's Web site in order to efficiently refer clients as efficiently as possible to the unit or Web pages best enabled to answer the client's informational needs. This can be accomplished by adhering to the following guidelines.

A. Many inquiries can be answered by referring the client to the Library & Gallery Web site (for example building hours, finding books, floorplans, etc.).

B. Other inquiries are more appropriately directed to department staff as follows:

1. In-person, telephone, or other inquiries should ordinarily be transferred not more than once.
2. Placing a client endlessly on hold is frustrating. If the information cannot be located within a short amount of time, it is best to ask the client's name and telephone number (or email address) and offer to get back in touch.
3. Avoid dead-end responses such as "I don't know" or "That's not my department/job." These are inappropriate and offensive in any workplace.
4. If staff are unable to respond directly or immediately transfer a client inquiry to appropriate unit/staff, it is appropriate to respond
   "I do not know the answer, but will be happy to find out the information for you and get back to you" or __
   "I will have the appropriate unit/staff call/contact you as soon as they are available or if you wish to make contact at a later time, their telephone number is XXX-XXXX."

Depending on the nature of the original inquiry, it may be counted as either a "Reference" or "Directional" transaction which should be tallied as appropriate with other inquiries. See Appendix A for definitions.

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