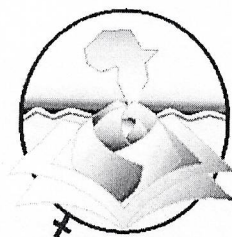


# WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY IN AFRICA LIBRARY

Library  
Department



549 Arcturus Road,  
Manresa Park,  
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Zimbabwe

*Addressing gender disparity and fostering equity in University Education*

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## LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

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## 1. TITLE OF THE POLICY: READER SERVICES POLICY

### 2. INTERPRETATION

**Reader Services Department:** a section that in the library provides assistance to the library users for effective, efficient and easier access and retrieval of library materials

**Circulation:** Circulation is a library term that means checking in and checking out library materials to users.

**Reference Queries:** Service provided by libraries whereby patrons are assisted in the location and retrieval of information relevant to their information needs

**Online Resources:** In general, web pages and documents on the internet that provide useful information. While an online resource is typically data and educational in nature, any support software available online can also be considered a resource

**User Training:** Provide teaching and training on use of the library services.

**Information Literacy skills** - library service meant to educate faculty members, helping them to understand the usefulness of e-resources and new modes of inquiry. Educate students the process of gathering information from printed materials and electronic resources in a library. Raise awareness that the process of gathering information is as important as the information itself.

**Library accounting:** Reconciliation of all transactions within the library such as fines, overdue loans and reprography with the help of the Accounts Department

### 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to describe the scope of the informational and readers' advisory services and to provide standards for a consistent and high level of service in each of the Library's service areas.

## **4. SCOPE**

### **4.1 Reader Services Staff**

Staff members at all service areas in the Reader Services Department, whether professional or paraprofessional, serve as the link between library resources and the patrons. As such, it is important that staff members be:

Knowledgeable about library materials and services

Open and approachable; friendly, but professional

Able to communicate effectively

Discreet in the handling of questions that may be confidential or sensitive in nature

Able to exercise good judgment both in the interpretation of policy and the handling of special situations

Actively involved in showing patrons, whenever possible, where resources or facilities are located, rather than providing verbal directions or pointing to the material

#### **4.1.1 Responsibility of RSD**

The reference service is the responsibility of the Sub-Librarian, RSD.

The reader service department shall be responsible for initiating and formation and reviewing of general rules and regulations for use of library materials and present them to the library management, who shall call for the library committee meeting.

He or she shall be responsible for:

- a) Circulation management
- b) Publication and revision of the Library Guide
- c) Operation of inter-library loan services;
- d) Outreach Services
- e) Instruction and Orientation Services
- f) Operation of the online public access catalogue
- g) Installation of a variety of security measures, including security guards
- h) Exhibitions and displays;
- i) Readers' enquiry services;
- j) E- Mails
- k) Attendance of Meetings at Departmental and University Librarians, Advisory Management Team Levels;
- l) Evaluation of services therefore shall be part of library quality assurance

#### **4.1.2 Duty areas shall cover**

- Circulation section
- Reference section
- Reserve section
- Study room facilities
- CCTV monitoring
- Security post
- Community / outreach programs

#### **4.2 Circulation Section**

This is one of the public relations sections of the Library. The Circulation Section has the responsibilities to:

- a) Register new Library users;
- b) Charge books out to users;
- c) Discharge returned books;
- d) Keep statistics and generate reports of Library users and Library materials consulted;
- e) Provide easy access to Library Materials for Library Patrons by introducing them to manual and Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)
- f) Display and shelve new books;
- g) Re-shelve used books;
- h) Conduct shelf-reading;
- i) Maintain books on the open shelves; and
- j) Maintain books on reserved and other closed access shelves and keep records of usage.

##### **4.2.1 Circulation**

The WUA Library is open to all members of the University community: students, academic and non-academic staff members. Circulation privileges for all categories are subject to approval.

This part of the policy covers all reading materials that are stored in the Women's University in Africa (WUA), Library. The policy applies to the students, teaching and non-teaching staff, researchers and approved readers from the community (patrons). The policy provides for the efficient and equitable circulation of all library reading materials.

#### **4.2.2 Policy Statement**

The policy is established to provide the framework within which all library resources are equitably and efficiently circulated to library patrons at WUA.

#### **4.2.3 Library patrons**

The library patrons shall be categorised as:

- (a) Students: Diploma, Undergraduates, Post graduates and PhD
- b) Staff: i) Academic i.e. permanent and part time  
ii) Non-teaching
- c) Approved readers

#### **4.3 Registration and Admission Patron registration**

Anyone who intends to use WUA library must be registered as patrons in order to be allowed to make use of the WUA library resources and facilities. Library patrons shall be imported from MyHope University management system

All students registered in the MyHope university management system shall be deemed registered with the library

At the end of every academic semester students accounts shall be deactivated and be activated after registering with the university

##### **4.3.1 Registration and Admission Procedures for WUA Staff and approved readers**

- For registration purposes staff must produce a staff ID and National ID and a letter from the registrar human resources.
- Staff members are then required to complete a library registration form, which should capture current contact details.
- The completed registration form is then, used to enter data in the library management system before it is filed in alphabetical order by surname for efficient record keeping.

#### **4.4 Operating hours**

##### **SEMESTER**

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday - Sunday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

##### **EXAM TIME**

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. – 18:00 p.m.

Saturday - Sunday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## **VACATION**

Monday-Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Closed weekends and Public Holidays.

Online resources are accessible 24 hours a day.

No users shall be permitted to remain in the Library after it has closed unless prior permission and arrangements have been made for such use.

### 4.5 Clients contacts

The library clients must inform library circulation staff about their current address, phone number and e-mail so that librarians will be able to communicate with its clients. Any overdue notices or communication from the library is communicated by phoning or via e-mail. To avoid potential fines or delinquencies, a borrower who changes addresses should notify the library directly of the address change.

#### 4.5.1 Confidentiality of Library Records

- a) All library records and other information relating to an individual's use of the library and its resources are considered confidential and will not be divulged to any third party.
- b) These records include, but are not limited to, circulation records of library materials, address and other registration information, reference or informational questions asked, interlibrary loan transactions, and computer database searches.
- c) This information may be consulted and used by library staff in the course of carrying out library operations.
- d) Access to this information will be restricted to authorized personnel within the Library and University for authorised reasons, as determined by the Librarian.
- e) The library will release an individual's library information only to that individual, to another individual with the prior written consent of the individual concerned or under a duly authorized judicial process. The individual requesting the information must provide proof of identity.
- f) All requests for information that do not fall under the above policies shall be forwarded to the Librarian.

#### 4.5.2 Identification card

A current Identification Card must be produced to check out or renew any library material. The library shall not render any service to clients who do not have a current I D card.

Special arrangements may need to be made by faculty/staff member who to allow or sent someone else to borrow material in his/her name only with prior authorization from Circulation staff.

In using the Identification Card for Library borrowing privileges, one agrees:

- a) To obey all rules and regulations of the University Library.
- b) To be responsible for materials borrowed and for any fines or fees accrued when materials are lost, damaged, or returned late;
- c) Not to use someone's ID to borrow books
- d) To report immediately to the Library the loss of Identification Card to avoid improper use.

#### 4.6 Loan Periods

Resource	Students	Students-Post Grad	Academic Staff	Non-academic Staff
<b>Books</b>	7 days	7 days	4 weeks	7 days
<b>Periodical (Current)</b>	in-house use	in-house use	in-house use	in-house use
<b>Reserve</b>	2 hours in- house use checked out after 9:30	2 hours in house checked out after 9:30	1 day	2 hours in-house use checked out after 9:30
<b>Reference books</b>	In house	In house	3 hours	2 hours
<b>Periodical, (Bound)</b>	In house	In house	In house	In house

<b>CD ROM /DVD</b>	1 day	1 day	1 day	1 day
<b>Maps</b>	7 days	7 days	7 days	7 days

#### ***4.6.1 Limit on number of items borrowed***

Faculty, staff and students of the University may have a limit of 4 items of long-term loan items, 1 A/V and 1 reserve items. This will depend on the size of the library collection and shall be reviewed from time to time.

#### **4.6.2 Renewals**

Books may be renewed unless recalled by another borrower. At WUA Library long-term loan items may be renewed at the Circulation Desk by bringing your books to the library. Items may also be renewed online through My Library Account or via any form of communication that is within the reach of the user (message or whatsapp). Renewal of reserve items should be done at the original service point.

#### **4.6.3 Renewal Limits**

All loan periods have renewal limits; library materials may be renewed until their renewal limit has been reached. Once reached, the material must be returned to the library before it can be charged again

<b>Material</b>	<b>Renewals</b>
Books	1
Periodicals	1
Reserve	1
A/V	0
Maps	0

#### **4.7 Library section**

Open shelves	Self service
Reserve	Librarian
Reference	Self service
Government Publications	Self service
Maps	Self service
Study rooms	Approved

#### **4.7.1 Recalls**

Any library materials may be recalled or have a hold placed on them. A recall is an official request for a book to be returned early. All materials are subject to recall at any time. Recalled materials must be returned within 2 days of the recall date to avoid fines. Recalls will be done upon request of the library material by an academic staff member

#### **4.7.2 Holds**

A hold is the reserving of an item, upon return, for the next user. Holds may be placed online or at the Circulation desk of the Library. Clients can put not more than 2 holds. Books with more than 5 holds will be put on reserve

#### **4.7.3 Searches**

Any library borrower who is unable to locate library material should ask for assistance at the circulation or reference desk. If circulation desk staff is unable to locate the item at this time, the borrower may request that a search be conducted for the item not found.

The search will be conducted in a timely manner, and if the material is located, a notice will be sent indicating the item is available and being held for 2 days from the date of notice. Faculty, staff and students may also request items through Interlibrary Loan.

#### **4.7.4 Returning Library Material**

Borrowers are responsible for returning materials by the date (or date and time) due. Borrowers are encouraged to return items in person; that is, to not give them to another person to return. Items must be returned to the circulation desk. Short-term loan items need to be returned to service point where item was checked out.

All short-term loan material must be returned to the service desk from which it was checked out by the time due in order to avoid fines. There is no grace period for reserve loan material.

#### **4.7.5 Campus Absences/ Travelling**

Borrowers intending to leave the local area for more than one week should either return all library material charged to them or make arrangements for their return if recalled. Absences requiring special arrangements should be made in advance with staff at the circulation.

#### **4.8 Fines**

Fines apply to all categories of users, including faculty, staff, and students and approved users. These are aimed at deterring clients from monopolizing library materials and facilities.

##### **4.8.1 Overdue fine**

- a) The overdue fine shall be reviewed from time to time
- b) Maximum overdue fine for students and staff shall be reviewed from time to time
- c) Fines on overdue Reserve Materials shall be charged per hour, the charge shall be reviewed from time to time
- d) Other fines shall be levied against clients who repeatedly break library rules and regulations
- e) Fines for overdue items from the WUA Library should be paid Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30A.M. - 4:30 P.M. at the Circulation Desk.
- f) A receipt should be given to the defaulters upon paying fine.

##### **4.8.2 Overdue Notices**

Overdue notices are sent electronically to the borrowers' university e-mail account unless the borrower specifies another address. Borrowers who have no e-mail account will receive a phone call.

Patrons are responsible for knowing and observing due dates stamped in books and should not be dependent upon Library notices or staff.

If a book accumulates 30 days of overdue fines, it is assumed lost and the circulation libraries shall proceed to levy the replacement value of the item presumed lost plus the total overdue fines accumulated by the 30<sup>th</sup> day of that month plus a processing fees as stipulated.

#### **4.8.3 Lost Items**

Patrons are charged for the replacement of a lost item plus a service fee to cover processing costs. The cost is arrived at by converting the foreign currency cost for overseas purchased materials to local currency, then adding to this amount the transportation and administrative cost. This then gives the prevailing market price as replacement value of the lost or damaged item.

#### **4.8.4 Debit orders**

Debit orders shall be raised directly on the defaulting student's fees and against staff salaries where fees charged are not cleared within the stipulated time as set in the reminders that are sent to defaulters.

#### **4.8.5 Reminders to Overdue, Lost, Damaged Items and Debit Orders**

- a) Overdue reminders are sent immediately on the first day the items falls overdue
- b) A second reminder is sent after two weeks
- c) The final reminder is sent after another two weeks from the date of the second reminder.
- d) A debit order will be raised with the Finance Department in the third week of the final reminder.

#### **4.8.6 Patron Blocks**

Patrons are blocked in the System from checking out additional materials when they become delinquent. Patrons are considered delinquent when:

- a) a book is 7 days overdue
- b) a maximum fine has been accumulated and fails to communicate or respond to notices.
- c) a recalled item is not returned
- d) they have overdue reserve material

Patrons are responsible for knowing and observing due dates stamped in books and should not be dependent upon Library notices.

Library users who constantly break library rules shall be sent for disciplinary hearing and be subjected to university disciplinary rules and regulations

The duty librarian shall establish the magnitude of offence committed by clients and refer the case to the university librarian who will subject the offender to the university disciplinary committee.

#### **4.9 Reference Section**

Reference materials are meant for consultation only and are therefore not to be borrowed or taken out of the library. Like the Circulation Section, this section is also a public relations section of the Library. Therefore, the Reference Section:

- a) Provides answers to Reference queries;
- b) Maintains Reference collection on closed shelves;
- c) Provides answers to directional and non-directional queries;
- d) Teaches clientele how to use special Reference materials; and
- e) Maintains statistics and generates reports of Reference materials consulted.

#### **4.10 Online Resources and Other Sources of Information**

Staff providing reference and readers' advisory services frequently reach beyond the reference, fiction, nonfiction and audio-visual collections of the Library and in-house expertise, by drawing on the resources of other organizations. These may include interlibrary loan, consulting with individual experts, consulting external information sources, regardless of medium, and by accessing information via the Internet and through online resources.

#### **Online Research Databases**

The Women's University in Africa Library subscribes to many electronic resources to meet the informational needs of its users. This service is available to all registered patrons within the Library. Staff shall use and recommend to patrons appropriate electronic resources, either from the Internet or from library subscription databases, to answer reference questions. Staff shall offer suggestions to patrons who are using Internet workstations and help within the limits of their expertise, in determining whether a resource is authoritative.

Definition and Scope of Reference and Research Assistance Reference service entails the location of specific facts, or the identification and provision of resources on a topic, while research assistance involves the in-depth coverage of a topic. The level of research assistance provided will vary according to the availability of staff, the staff and customer's knowledge

of the subject, the volume of other customer requests, the depth of the collection, the complexity of the question and the time frame in which the information is needed.

#### **4.11 Reader Services**

A variety of readers' advisory services are available to library patrons. They incorporate the same public service principles that guide library staff in all patron Reference Service interactions where the patron is researching information. This interaction may take place at the desk, in the stacks or while in the process of aiding patrons in searching the library OPAC. When appropriate to the patron's needs, the staff member shall direct the patron to print and/or online readers' advisory resources.

#### **4.12 Reader Services programs**

Open Access Week, book displays, and author -led book discussion groups. All of the programs play an important role in the Library's provision of Reference and Reader Services. Library staff also promotes library services and resources by preparing bibliographic tools, presenting talks or participating in events sponsored by local organizations.

#### **4.13 Instruction and Orientation Services**

Instruction and orientation in library use may range from basic individual and class instruction on how to use catalogues, reference tools, computer applications and the Internet, to more formal assistance designed to increase the patron's knowledge of the Library's materials and services, as well as to provide timely, thorough and accurate responses to the requested information. Upon request, staff shall provide tours of the Library and its collections in accordance with staffing and scheduling needs. Loan of Reference Materials from the Reference and Reader Services Departments Reference materials do not circulate because these resources are required to conduct ongoing daily service routines of library staff. Reference resources are the tools of librarians and their work. Extended absence from the shelf would interrupt the provision of timely.

#### **4.14 Information Literacy Skills**

Information literacy is about recognising and defining a need for information; selecting appropriate resources and developing a search; critically evaluating results; recognising a solution; acknowledging the use of sources. It is about using appropriate information resources, regardless of medium; this may embrace oral, printed, electronic and other resources. Information literacy is not about learning to use computers but it is about the use of ICTs as a tool of research.

Through well-co-ordinated information literacy programmes, students will be able to access information efficiently and effectively; evaluate information critically and competently and use information accurately and creatively. For example a lot of people do not know how to effectively make use of the internet thus rushing to 'google' anything they come across. It is important to note on this that Google only finds 20% of information on the internet. The other 80% is hidden in databases and as such through Information literacy programmes students are taught how to effectively search the internet. Information literacy programmes can also help students to understand how to cite their work and avoid plagiarism.

Information literacy is about lifelong learning and includes formal and informal education and is not necessarily a linear process. The library conducts practical tutorials in classrooms and the module made available on the website.

#### 4.15 Orientation

It is mandatory that all students must conduct library orientation at the start of their programs do that they become aware of the role of the library.

#### 4.16 Clearance from the Library

All students and staff must be cleared in the library Department on completion or termination of their studies or employment contracts respectively. The following procedures are followed before users are cleared from the library. Students can only be cleared after returning all library materials and paying all outstanding fees.

#### 4.17 Circulation Statistics

Compilation of statistics is an integral part of assessing and auditing usage of WUA library and reading materials. The statistics enable librarians to qualitatively plan for collection building and infrastructural expansion. The compilation of the following statistics is vital in this exercise:

- Circulation statistics for reading material in the Reserve Section and the Open Shelves on a daily basis.
- Electronic resources usage statistics
- Statistics of the number of library users per day.

### 5. PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE POLICY

- Fairness
- Cooperation

- Professionalism
- Respect

## **6. POLICY PROVISIONS**

**The Reader service policy aims to ensure that:**

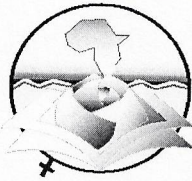
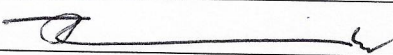
- a) Conduct that disturbs library users or Library staff or that hinders people from using the Library or library materials is prohibited. You will be asked to move or leave if your behaviour disturbs others.
- b) Patrons who lose library resources are charged for the replacement of a lost item plus a service fee to cover processing costs.
- c) Debit orders shall be raised directly on the library clients charged are not cleared within the stipulated time.
- d) For security reasons, bags and cases may not be taken into the library. They should be left in the lockers by the Library entrance
- e) Damage, destruction or theft of Library property (including materials, furniture or equipment) is prohibited.
- f) Library materials must not be marked, defaced, mutilated or annotated in any way.
- g) Users whose bodily hygiene is so offensive as to interfere with other Library users may be required to leave the building.
- h) Sleeping or dozing is prohibited in the Library.
- i) Any library client who enters the library with a bag shall be searched before leaving the library.
- j) Bags shall be left at owners 'risk.
- k) Use of mobile phones is prohibited in the library; there is a fine for a cell phone ringing in the library. Mobile telephones must be switched off.
- l) Smoking is prohibited as it is synonymous with fire which is hazardous to libraries and resources.
- m) Soliciting donations of money or anything of value and selling or taking orders is not allowed in the library.
- n) Desks and furniture should not be moved without the permission of the Librarian.
- o) Books/Journals must be left on the tables where they were used. Users should not return them to the shelves. This will be done by the librarians.
- p) Strict silence, decorum and discipline must be maintained in the library.

- q) Library users must always have all their possessions in their control.
- r) Bags, briefcases, raincoats, and umbrellas shall not be taken into the Library, but should be left at the baggage area near the exit.
- s) Do not exchange IDs or borrow books on behalf of another.
- t) Consumption of food and beverages within the Library is not permitted as such victuals attract rodents and other vermin detrimental to library materials.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Reader Services Department	Develop and disseminate a University-wide Library ICT Policy
ICT Department	Provide framework for Library ICT Policy in terms of acquisition, use and asset management, disposal and provide ICT support
Accounts Department	Provide guidance on the management of library daily takings
PR and Marketing Department	Provide framework for marketing of library services and activities

## 8. DOCUMENT VERSION MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Document Name	Reader Services	
Version Reference	1.0	
Document Owner	Office of the Librarian	
Approved by		
Date of Approval		
Review Date	January 2025	

**WUA**