

Recommendations of the Working Group:

1. Reference Services

Both expert and general reference services will be available to all users including faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, visiting scholars, and the wider community. The opportunity for referral to expert reference service will be provided via in-person, chat, telephone, and email access. Reference questions will receive verification of receipt within 24 hours, and questions will be answered as soon as possible. The general referral policy provided through the Reference Hub will form the basis for the IAS referral policy. More information can be found at http://www.library.illinois.edu/committee/ReferenceServices/policies/referral_policy.html.

Resources for the service will follow the guidelines contained in the READ scale, providing tiered reference based upon the difficulty of the question received. All graduate students, library staff, and library faculty will receive training on the implementation of the READ scale.

IASL will participate as an active member of the Main Library Reference Hub, providing staffing for Virtual Reference and/or Information Desk staffing as needed in addition to maintaining an in unit service desk. In addition, it is suggested that area experts hold regularly scheduled office hours and publicize these hours in the same manner that other campus faculty provide in order to facilitate interactions with our users.

The DeskTracker software will be used to track both the number and level of questions that the unit receives. In addition, the room/gate count function of the software will be used on a daily basis, not just during "Sweeps Week" statistics collection. All members of the unit will be trained in the use of this software.

Recommendations regarding general reference training and the READ scale are attached as Appendix 1. Specifics on the format and choices of DeskTracker statistics is attached as Appendix 2.

2. Web Presence

The desire of many patrons to enjoy unmediated support will be provided by an IASL website which will provide access to all of the collections and services of the unit. This will include a central email account on "Squirrel" mail where user questions and comments can be accessed. This new account, IASL@library.illinois.edu, has been created and will provide a link from the webpages of the unit to facilitate inquiries from our users. The head of the unit is responsible for the daily review and triage of questions and comments received

through this account, and all librarians, permanent staff, and graduates assistants will have access to this account.

The website will employ both LibGuides and webpages to promote access to the resources contained in IASL. This will require specialists to develop the necessary content for these guides related to reference resources, databases, journals, and other materials. In addition, guides related to specific courses or topical areas will be developed.

3. Communication

The diversity of resources and areas within the unit requires a consistent commitment to communication between members of IASL. Based upon this necessity, a centrally supported tool such as a wiki will be developed to allow information sharing. In addition to containing information regarding the general policies and operations of the unit, this will provide access to any training materials, either general or subject-specific, that might be useful for the provision of reference service. A suggested template for the wiki is attached as Appendix 3.

Communication and training will be provided in two ways. Student assistants and graduate students will attend weekly training sessions that will expose them to the operational issues of the unit as well as area specific resources. Library staff and faculty will enjoy continuing professional development in conjunction with IASL staff meetings. We propose that staff meetings be held twice each month with alternate meetings devoted entirely to furthering an understanding of the specific resources and challenges of working in our related geographic areas or pulling in members of other units in the Library to share their expertise with us. In addition, we would like to consider the possibility of having one or two mini-workshops on specialized topics outside of the unit such as business resources or government documents.

4. Assessment

The implementation of DeskTracker at all levels and at all times is an essential element in the assessment of reference services in the unit. Evaluation of both the quantity and the types of responses will be done to ensure the best possible service. If deemed necessary, a tool similar to the [RoloEDX](#) or the central reference [Rolodex](#) will be developed for common questions identified through the use of DeskTracker.

In addition to the collection of reference statistics, Google Analytics will track the digital use of the unit's website. Analysis of the discrete statistics provided by this site will inform decision-making and provide us with factual evidence for user needs. The IASL homepage should be viewed as a continual work-in-progress. In the

fall semester a number of usability tests will be performed to identify strengths and weaknesses of the site. In addition, periodic assessment of user reactions to the site will be performed through surveys, focus groups, and other techniques as required.

Appendix 1 -Training

Training comes first and foremost in support of reference services in the unit. The diversity of languages and orientations provide extraordinary challenges for the provision of reference services in IAS. This training is essential for all member of IAS whether librarians, library staff, graduate students, or student assistants. Training will be approached in several ways, reflecting the multifaceted needs of our community of users. The implementation of the READ scale <<http://readscale.org/read-scale.html>> as a basis for reference assessment and triage is reflected in this training.

First, **student assistants** will be trained in basic reference activities to be delivered at the service desk. This includes a philosophy of service, general policies, emergency procedures, circulation procedures, and general phone etiquette. In addition to this service oriented training, they will also be tasked with a variety of assignments in support of the unit such as shelving.

Second, **graduate assistants** will be trained in all of the above areas. They will be expected to participate in Library-wide training offered in August that includes, but is not limited to, general orientation, how to search the online catalogs, finding English-language articles and journals, applicable database searching, online reference tools, the reference interview, chat reference, and G.A. supervisory duties. Training related to the discrete area and international studies tools of the unit will also be provided at this time.

Additional training on the unique aspects of IASL will be provided on a regular (weekly?) basis for both of the above cohorts. This will include training on language specific resources that might be used at Level 1 and Level 2 on the READ scale. The individuals doing the training will be pulled both from across the area specializations in IAS and across the Library. Those students who possess specific language skills covered within the unit may receive training on the reference tools that will allow them to answer questions at level 3 of the READ scale.

Next, **library staff** will receive training and/or review on all of the aspects mentioned previously. Although many staff members are already doing excellent work in the provision of reference services to a variety of populations, a review of reference competencies will provide a baseline for both experienced and novice members of the

unit. Those individuals who possess relevant language skills and especially those situated in the Slavic Reference Service should be able to provide reference support at Level 3 and above on the READ scale. In addition, to support the training of library staff and graduate assistants, area specialists are asked to provide basic information on the most important works in their fields in order to increase the level of expertise available in the unit.

Finally, **librarians** will be encouraged to participate in general training in order to receive a refresher on the most essential aspects of providing reference in the unit and to provide training for others in the unit. This will include all of the above and English language resources that can be used to answer user questions. An overview of those resources in the vernacular that might be pointed to in order to initiate research on the part of the user will also be provided.

Appendix 2- Desk Tracker

In order to optimize the utility of the data gathered from the implementation of Desk Tracker across levels, the Desk Tracker interface will be standardized across the IAS Library. The new interface, which uses the Undergraduate Library interface as a model, will conform to the standards used in the wider Library and will appear as follows (with one addition, which will be explained below):

<input type="button" value="Submit"/>		Batch Mode Multiple Entries Custom Timestamp
Patron Type <input type="text"/>	Question Type: <input type="text"/>	
Your Status <input type="text"/>	READ Scale <input type="text"/>	
In Person <input type="text"/>	Government Information Used <input type="radio"/> Yes	
IM/Chat <input type="text"/>	Subject (Main Heading) <input type="text"/>	
Email <input type="text"/>	Description <div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>	
Phone <input type="text"/>	Referred to Specialist <input type="radio"/> Referred to: <input type="text"/>	
SMS - Text Message <input type="text"/>		
<input type="button" value="Submit"/>		

The only difference will be the addition of a text box in the right column entitled "Languages Used (Other Than English)" where the user will type in any languages used other than English in their reference interactions.

Appendix 3- International and Area Studies Library Wiki Space

The International and Area Studies Library Wiki will facilitate interdepartmental communication as well as provide access to both general and subject-specific training materials. Access to the wiki will be restricted to IAS faculty, staff, and graduate/student assistants. The wiki will include the following sections:

- Front Page/News- Changes in hours, staffing or services as well as upcoming events will be reported here.
- Frequently Asked Questions- This section will have a list of our most common reference questions, as well as the answers.
- Technical Problems- This will be a space to report technical problems such as print jams, broken copiers, software issues, scanner problems, etc. The resolution of the problem should also be recorded here.
- Incident Reports- Problem patrons and other unusual/noteworthy incidents will be recorded here.
- Training Materials- This section will include links to training documents on topics such as opening and closing procedures, how to operate the scanner & microfilm reader, e-reserves, circulation procedures, emergency/evacuation plans, and the office phone tree.