

Library Policy

*Updated as of 7/2/2019

The libraries' mission is to collect, preserve, and make readily available materials of all kinds for the benefit of the students and employees of Oberlin College. The success of the libraries' policies depends upon the cooperation of all users. The lending regulations are generous, reflecting a commitment to promote a free and open environment conducive to learning. On the other hand, the libraries do insist on strict compliance with the basic regulations listed below, especially those that call for prompt return of materials when due or when needed by others. In addition, the libraries are quite serious about dealing firmly with anyone who fails to respond to library notices, or who improperly removes, damages, hides, or otherwise misuses materials so that others are denied access to them.

Current borrowing policies are summarized on a handout available in the Mary Church Terrell Main Library (Mudd Center) and the branches in the Conservatory (music), Allen Art Building (art), and Science Center (biology/chemistry/physics). Students are also eligible to check out materials from Oberlin Public Library.

A. Basic Rules and Penalties

One's current OCID card with barcode should be presented each time one borrows books or other materials. No other form of ID will be accepted.

Students may borrow books from the general stacks for one semester, subject to recall by another borrower after one week from the initial checkout date. Recalls for reserve are given priority and may be due in less than one week. The person who borrows an item accepts responsibility for its return in good condition and by the date indicated at time of checkout or by the date indicated on subsequent library notices. We request that items be returned to the circulation desk from which they were checked out, or the appropriate book drop for that location. Borrowers who fail to return materials on time or in good condition will be fined or billed in accordance with current policy.

Individuals who receive a recall notice indicating that the item has been recalled must return the item directly to a circulation staff member (rather than leaving it in the book drop) to avoid accumulating fines and to allow the item to be processed quickly for the next user. The libraries expect students to check their e-mail frequently.

Recalled items must be returned immediately. If a borrower fails to return by the due date an item that has been recalled for another reader, a \$10 per day fine is assessed for each day the book is overdue. Failure to respond to recall notices deprives other users access to library materials and may be taken as an Honor Code violation and dealt with accordingly before the Honor Committee. (See the Students' Rights and Responsibilities; Sanctions and Honor Code Violations, section I. F. 6). In addition, withholding library materials may be construed as theft.

Other short-term loans (laptops, periodicals, A-V materials, materials borrowed from other libraries, and other high demand items) are also subject to fines and referral to the college judicial system or the Honor Committee if not returned by the due date. Current fine rates are available from the circulation staff in each library.

A borrower who fails to return library material upon request will be prevented from enrolling the following semester. Departing students who fail to return library material will be charged for the

replacement costs of the material plus a processing fee for each item not returned. The full amount billed (replacement cost and processing fees) will be refunded if the material is returned in good condition within 30 days of billing.

Fines should be paid at the Main Library circulation desk upon receipt of the fine notice. Unpaid fines totaling \$150 or more will result in the student's borrowing privileges being suspended. Fines remaining unpaid at the end of the semester may result in a student's enrollment being held the following semester.

B. Reserve System Rules and Penalties

Many instructors use reserve shelves to ensure access to heavily used sources. These materials normally circulate for three hours (two hours at the Conservatory Library) unless otherwise indicated. Some reserve materials are available for overnight loan, due at the posted time the next day.

Questions about reserve policies should be directed to the reserve supervisor in each library.

Fines for overdue reserve materials are listed in the Fines and Penalties chart at the end of this document.

Because of the need to ensure reasonable access to required reading, fines for violating reserve regulations are stiff, and improper retention or removal of material is regarded as a very serious offense. Failure to respond to overdue notices deprives others of access and may be taken as an Honor Code violation and dealt with accordingly before the honor committee. Repeated failure to return reserve materials on time may be referred to the college judicial system for additional penalties.

Reserve fines should be paid at the Main Library circulation desk upon receipt of the fine notice. Unpaid fines totaling \$150 or more result in the student's borrowing privileges being suspended. Fines remaining unpaid at the end of the semester may result in a student's enrollment being held the following semester.

C. Building Rules and Penalties

Violation of established building rules may be grounds for fines and referral to the college judicial system. In order to protect the collections from pest infestations, we reserve the right to restrict food consumption. Beverages are allowed in approved containers only. Possession of sound recording equipment is prohibited in the Conservatory Library. Furniture, typewriters, computer equipment, components of audio and audiovisual playback equipment, and other library equipment are not to be moved from their established locations or altered in any way. Defacement of library furnishings or parts of the physical buildings themselves is forbidden. Moreover, unauthorized entry in the building roof areas and unauthorized presence in the libraries after regular hours are both subject to disciplinary action by the college judicial system or arrest and prosecution by local authorities.

Patron safety is of particular concern to the libraries. The sounding of an alarm requires all library users immediately to leave the building in an orderly manner. Failure to comply with this, or failure to follow the instructions of library staff, college, or city safety personnel may result in immediate disciplinary action by the college judicial system.

D. Theft and Mutilation Rules and Penalties

Nothing is more reprehensible in an academic library than the theft or willful destruction of library materials. Theft is not only a crime against the library as an institution, but as an antisocial act it strikes at the vulnerability of an open community. A person who conceals library materials while still on library premises, who improperly removes or damages equipment, books, journals, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, documents, recordings, video or audio tapes, computer software, or who fails to respond to repeated requests for return of materials may be subject to arrest and prosecution for theft in the local courts. If such an offender is an Oberlin College student, the librarian also reserves the option of proceeding against such offender through the honor committee or college judicial system, where the penalties may include suspension or dismissal, as well as restitution of any losses suffered. Such offenses will be taken very seriously