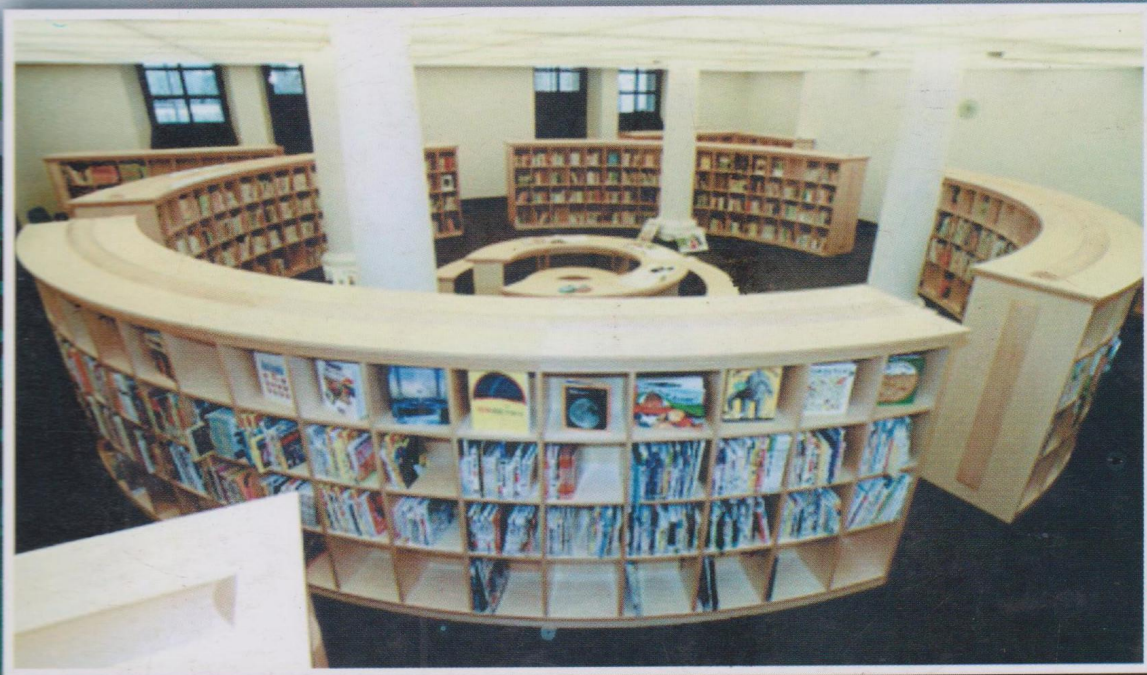




# LIBRARY AND INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS:



## Instructional Manual

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## **CHAPTER FOUR LIBRARY SERVICES**

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### **Introduction**

**T**his chapter explains the concept of information services and provides in-depth knowledge on the types of information services that are offered in academic libraries including the Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU) library. It provides basic information on the requirements for the services and the practical steps involved in accessing the services without stress and waste of time. Information services are provided in academic libraries to guarantee effective utilisation of information resources-books, journals, newspapers, government publication, e-resources, etc., available within and beyond the library. Information services are offered at different service points (units) and could be broadly categorised into two groups- free-based services and fee-based services.

#### **A. Definition of Information Services**

Information services are professional activities engaged by the library with the aim of encouraging and ensuring that both staff and students of the host institution make optimal use of the varied available information resources with seamless effort. Information services, according to Akwang (2013), could simply be defined as a range of duties that involve the application of professional skills and competences in the provision and dissemination of information to satisfy the information needs and expectations of library users. Another name for information services is library services. It is pertinent to note that libraries, especially academic libraries, are saddled with the responsibility of providing quality information services to support the educational, social, political, and economic development of all its clientele in different academic disciplines.

#### **B. Categories of Library/Information Services**

Information services in academic libraries are broadly categorised into two groups - the free-based and fee-based. The choice of what to be included in the categories is strictly the library's decision. In AKSU library the categorisation is as follows:

- **Free-based Services** – These are services that do not attract charges or fee. In other words, a user needs NOT to pay any fee to be able to access

such services. Free-based services are regarded as core or traditional services which could be delivered with or without technological skills and facilities. Free-based services include lending services, reservation services, exhibition and display services, referral services, user education (orientation exercise), Internet services, current awareness service, inter-library loan services and document delivery among others.

- **Fee-based Services** – These are services that attract charges of fee. That means, a user needs to pay a fee to be able to access such services. The library makes use of technological facilities and competences to provide fee-based services and that makes it more demanding. Therefore, owing to the services involvement and necessity, the AKSU library places minimal (cost recovery) charges on some of their services to be able to satisfy users' information needs. Fee-based services include registration services, reprographic services, and bindery services.

### **C. Types of Library Services in AKSU Library**

The Akwa Ibom State University Library engages in numerous professional activities to guarantee effective and efficient use of the library collection. By so doing, the library offers to its registered users a wide array of information services namely: Registration Services, Lending Services, Reservation Services, Inter-Library Loan Services, Exhibition and Display Services, Referral Services, User Education Services, Reprographic Services, Bindery Services, Internet Services, Reference Services, and Current Awareness Services. It is worth mentioning that the Akwa Ibom State University Library in both Ikot Akpaden and Obio Akpa Campuses provides the above-mentioned services primarily to its registered library users (internal users) and sometimes to those residing within the host community (external users) with due authorisation. Also, these services are provided at service points designated at different divisions of the library – Readers' Services Division, e-library Division, Reference Division, and Reprographic Division.

#### **1. Registration Services**

The registration services can be regarded as the fundamental process through which all the prospective users (staff and students) in any institution of learning are given eligibility to use library facilities and other services. In other words, it is the **first step** one must take in order to become a *bonafide* library user who is given the **privilege** to consult (read) any book of choice within the library or

borrow for home use. Every staff or student is expected to **register only ONCE** to become a member of the library and the membership is **renewable** at the beginning of every new academic session.

### **Requirements for Registration with the AKSU Library**

Student:     i. Fee clearance card  
              ii. Original school fee receipt  
              iii. Two coloured passport-sized photograph (red background)

Note: The library accepts fee clearance card or original school fee receipt.

Staff:        i. Staff identity card  
              ii. One coloured passport-sized photograph (red background)

### **Practical Steps for Registration**

- Move to circulation desk in the Readers' Services Division
- Present fee clearance card or original school fee receipt (for students), staff identity card (for staff) to the library staff in-charge of registration.
- Present two (for students) and one (for staff) coloured passport photograph. It is advisable to write your full name at the back of the passport-sized photograph before presenting it.
- Write your name in the register provided for the purpose.
- Collect and complete (fill) a copy of membership application form (yellow card) and a copy of library card (white card).
- Leave the completed library card (white card) with the staff in-charge and go with the membership application form (yellow card).
- Take the membership application form (with your passport-sized photograph) to your Head of Department or any other authorised officer for signature and official stamp.
- Return the completed, signed, and stamped membership application form to the circulation desk.
- Collect two (for students) or three (for staff) customised borrower's ticket and a library card.

Always present the library card at the Porter's Desk before entering the **library** and use the borrower's ticket to borrow books for home use. Note that the **library** card and the borrower's ticket are NOT transferable.

### • **Lending Services**

Lending services is also known as charging and discharging **services**. This is the most important and essential service that allows the **library to**

circulate its information resources among its users. Lending services allows registered library users to have direct access to the variety of information resources available in the library. The Akwa Ibom State University Library adopts a suitable lending system (a combination of Newark and Browne systems) that permits every registered library user to borrow books of interest for a period of time and return same on date due. Apart from books, other library resources like newspapers, journals, magazines, special collection can be borrowed for reading or consultation under special loan, especially to staff members. In most cases, library users are permitted to make photocopies of the pages needed from the library resources. Lending services also involves preparation and issuance of overdue notices and recall notices to erring users and concerned users as the case may be. Lending services could be accessed in Readers' Services Division.

### **Practical Steps for Borrowing**

- Browse the shelves to identify the book(s) to borrow.
- Check the physical parts of the book(s) to be sure they are not mutilated.
- Hand over the book(s) to staff in-charge at the circulation desk or counter along with your borrower's ticket(s). A student can borrow two books at a time while a staff can borrow three books at a time.
- Ensure that the book cards inside the book pocket are removed and a date is stamped or written on the date-due slip (book pocket and date-due slip are usually attached at the inside back cover of every library book)
- Make sure the book handed over to you is in good condition and it is the same book you want to borrow.

### **Loan Period in AKSU Library**

Loan period varies from library to library and from user to user. This variation depends on the size of the library collection and the circulation policy of the library. However, the Akwa Ibom State University Library approves the following:

**Students:** Two (2) weeks

**Staff:** Four (4) weeks

The implication here is that a user should not keep the library book beyond the stipulated period. The library usually writes or stamps the actual date to return the borrowed book(s) on the date-due slip. If a user fails to return the book on or before the date, he or she will pay a fine as stipulated by the library. To avoid keeping the book beyond the date due and paying fine, a user is advised to take

the book to the library within due date for renewal or extension of loan period if need be.

### **3. Reservation Services**

The library provides reservation services with the aim of keeping some books on closed access. That means, such books are kept in a restricted area in the Readers' Services Division and they are not to be borrowed.

#### **Conditions for Book Reservation in the AKSU Library**

- Books that are out of print.
- Books that are in high demand (heavily used).
- Books that could be stolen or mutilated easily.
- Books requested by lecturers for assignment.
- Books that are limited in copies.
- Books given to the library by lecturers on special arrangement.

#### **Policy on Use of Reserved Books in the AKSU Library**

The Akwa Ibom University Library has developed a policy to guide the use of books on reservation. The policy spells out the following:

- Books on reservation can only be used within the library by registered library users.
- Reserved books are arranged on separate shelves behind the circulation desk.
- Reserved books are consulted within the library for not more two (2) hours.
- The book should be taken to the service point (circulation desk) for renewal if the user is not through within the stipulated time.
- Books on reservation can be given on **special loan** especially to lecturers for over-night.

### **4. Inter-library Loan Services**

Inter-library loan services remain an indispensable mode of operation that enhances information accessibility and resources sharing among libraries. It is a method whereby two, three or more libraries of equal standing come into agreement or partnership to share the information resources and services of their individual libraries among them to meet the information needs of library users. This type of services emerged as a result of the economic concept of **lack of funds** to acquire all the needed information resources to satisfy the **increasing** population of library users. The Akwa Ibom State University Library is in partnership with the University of Uyo for inter-library loan services. In **other**

words, library users in the Akwa Ibom State University can borrow books held in the University of Uyo Library by request and vice versa. The request or transaction for inter-library loan can only be handled by the domiciled library on behalf of the library user. Inter-library loan services could be accessible in Readers' Services Division.

### **Requirements for Accessing Inter-Library Loan Services**

- The information seeker must be a student or staff of the university who is duly registered in the library.
- He/she must be a regular user of the library.
- He/she must display good attitude within the library.
- He/she must present a recommendation letter signed by Dean, Head of Department, or any authorised officer.
- He/she must be ready to bear the cost of the transaction.

### **5. Exhibition and Display Services**

The library provides exhibition and display services to advertise its recently acquired collection to the various users. Newly acquired books, journals, magazines, newspapers, reference resources, government publications, etc, are advertised to library users through exhibition and display services. The AKSU library creates awareness of the new library materials using the following strategies:

- **New Arrivals Shelves**

These are shelves labelled “New Arrivals” and kept at a strategic position away from other shelves in Readers' Services Division. Books that are newly acquired and processed are displayed on the New Arrival Shelves for the period of one (1) month before they are transferred to their permanent shelves. This is to enable all library users see the new resources in their respective disciplines. At this point, users are not permitted to remove the resources from the New Arrivals Shelves for any reason until the expiration of the period or unless authorisation is given by the librarian-in-charge.

- **Magazine Stands**

These are facilities provided in Serials Division to enable the library display newly acquired magazines and journals in different disciplines. As the books, magazines and journals on display are to be advertised for the period of one (1) month before they are transferred to permanent shelves, library users are restricted from free access to the resources unless permission is given by the staff in-charge.

- **Newspaper Stands/Racks**

As the name implies, these are facilities provided in Serials Division that enable the library advertise current editions of local and national newspapers. The library acquires these newspapers to keep their users abreast of what is happening in the society. Unlike the books, magazines and journals, library users are free to remove the newspapers from the stand/rack for consultation or reading within the service points. In other words, a newspaper should not be taken out of the service point or borrowed for home use.

- **Display Boards**

These are boards mostly made of wood that are positioned at strategic locations within the Readers' Services Division or and at the library verandas. Type written information, paper cuttings, flyers on several issues such as admission, scholarship, call for papers, notices, new arrivals lists, lecture and examinations time tables, and any other pieces of information are displayed on the boards for prompt viewing and action. Library users are not permitted to remove the displayed information for any reason.

- **Referral Services**

Referral services could be regarded as specialised services predicated on the belief that no library could provide all the relevant information resources needed by every library user to support learning, teaching, and research processes. It may happen that a library user may search through the entire Akwa Ibom State University Library collection without getting the needed information. It follows that such a user could be referred to other libraries, professional organisations, information centres, research institutes and any other sources of information where the needed information can be found. In order to provide quality referral services, the AKSU library develops a list of referral institutions and experts in different academic disciplines and the list is updated on a regular basis. Referral services can be accessed in Reference Division.

## 7. **User Education Services**

The library develops a series of programmes that could equip its users with adequate knowledge needed for effective and efficient use of the library. The series of programmes could be subsumed under user education services because they are meant to educate the library users; better still, impart the right skills to solve information problems.



## **Types of User Education Services in the AKSU Library**

The AKSU library provides user education services through the following strategies.

- **Orientation Exercise:** The university library gives a day talk to all new students and the library conducts orientation exercise especially to the newly admitted students to get them familiar with the library system.
- **Library Skills:** Professional staff of the library teach Library Skills as a General Course under GSS 101 as compulsory course to all year one students in the institution.  
**Library Handbook:** The library provides to every registered user, a library handbook which contains relevant information that could promote library use.
- **Individual Instruction:** There are some cases professional librarians take upon themselves to educate keen individual user to develop skills in the use of the information resources in the library independently.

- **Reprographic Services**

Not all the information resources can be openly accessed or borrowed by library users. That means, some materials in the library are NOT to be borrowed out of the library. In such situation, such materials can only be consulted within the service unit where the materials are housed. The library, through reprographic services, gives library users the opportunity to photocopy some pages of interest from such materials for home use and personal document. In other words, the AKSU library provides photocopying facilities in both campuses for such purpose at the Reprographic Unit.

### **Rationale for Reprographic Services**

- To enable users access information in materials that cannot be borrowed from the library.
- To facilitate quick and easy access to information in any material.
- To minimise the rate of mutilation and book theft.
- To dissuade library users from the habit of hiding library books with the intention of accessing them at will.
- To boost the library internally generated revenue.

- **Bindery Services**

Bindery services is one of the information services offered in libraries especially

academic libraries. The reason for establishing bindery services is to enable the reinforcement of library books that are torn or mutilated, and binding of personal materials like textbooks, magazines, research projects, etc at a subsidised rate compared to other outlets. The AKSU library renders bindery services to staff and students at the Reprographic Unit in at Ikot Akpaden and Obio Akpa Campuses.

### **Range of Binding Services in the AKSU Library**

- Soft Binding
- Hard Binding
- Spiral Binding
- Lettering, etc.

#### **• Internet Services**

Every library is supposed to provide both print and non-print information resources to its users. In other words, it is the responsibility of all libraries to facilitate easy and quick access to information via the Internet in addition to the physical books on the shelves. The Akwa Ibom State University Library considers this as important responsibility; thus, establishes an e-library to enable its users have access to quality and adequate on-line information in different subject areas. That means, any registered library user (staff and students) at both Ikot Akpaden and Obio Akpa campuses can visit the e-library for on-line searching or browsing. Also, library users can use their personal laptops and phones within the library to access the Internet and its related services provided they have the required login code.

#### **• Reference Services**

Reference services could be considered as the most interesting and stimulating of library services that demands high level of professionalism on the part of the librarian-in-charge. The essence of reference services in any library is to give personal assistance that could help library users satisfy their information needs as well as justify the training of the librarians. This type of services requires limited or extended search for information depending on what type of reference query actually asked by the library user. Reference query or information query could be as simple as directional question, ready/quick reference question or as complex as database searches, research questions, etc.

The directional question requests for specific location within the institution or library. For example: Where is the Vice Chancellor's office? Which unit of the

library can I find current newspapers? The ready/quick reference question refers to specific questions that could be answered with ease by using one or two reference resources. Questions in this category include: What is the meaning, synonym, or antonym of “communal” or any other word? Which country hosted the 2010 World Cup? The databases searches and research questions are more complex queries that demand in-depth consultation of varieties of on-line and off-line information resources.

The provision of reference services in the AKSU library involves proper understanding of users' queries, adoption of different search strategies and arriving at dependable answers to such queries using electronic or manual system. The best reference services combine mediated searching, formal and informal guidance and personal assistance to library users. Reference services could be accessible at the Reference Division and sometimes in Readers' Services Division

- **Current Awareness Services**

This is another essential service of the library provided to different categories of library users to acquaint them with recent publications and current developments in different areas of specialisation that might help them in their learning, teaching, and research processes. In the Akwa Ibom State University Library, Current Awareness Services is offered in the Reference Division by a professional librarian.

**Requirements for Accessing Current Awareness Services**

- Register or update membership status with the library.
- Present your library card to the librarian-in-charge in Reference Division.
- Give your detailed profile (i.e. name, department, phone number(s), e-mail) to the librarian-in-charge.
- Register your research area or information need with the librarian-in-charge.
- Keep close official contact with the librarian-in-charge for updates.

The above information will help the librarian to match the available recent information resources to the user's needs. In other words, the librarian-in-charge will inform the potential user of the recent information resources acquired by the library that may meet the user's need.

The matching could be done manually for physical resources and electronically for electronic resources. However, the result of the matching is communicated to the library users through direct contact, phones, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter,

WhatsApp, and any other social media. The library users are usually up-dated as new publications in the research area are added to the library collection. It is advisable to inform the library when user's information need is met and when there is a new research problem.

### **Review Questions**

- Explain the term “information services.”
- Mention at least five (5) types of non-print information resources.
- List ten (10) types of information resources available in the Akwa Ibom State University Library.
- List five (5) types of information services you have accessed in the Akwa Ibom State University Library.
- How best can information services be provided in Akwa Ibom State University Library? Give reasons for your answers.
- Identify at least three challenges you have encountered in the library while accessing information services.
- What solutions would you proffer to surmount the challenges?

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