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NRAO Library Reference Policy

PREPARED BY	ORGANIZATION	DATE
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Change Record

VERSION	DATE	REASON
1.0	05/22/20	Draft
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I INTRODUCTION

The National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) Library Reference Policy exists to define communities supported, types of support granted by community, and the terms of support. As a Federally Funded Research and Development Center supported by NSF funding, the NRAO Library is obligated to provide reasonable support to the broader American public in addition to affiliated staff and organizations.

2 PATRONS

The patron groups and terms of NRAO reference services are described below.

2.1 NRAO Staff

NRAO Staff will be fully supported by the library in accordance with all library policies. Reference the Library Management Policy and ancillary documents for more details. NRAO Staff is defined to include Green Bank Observatory and Associated Universities, Inc. employees.

2.2 NRAO Students

Sponsored NRAO students will be fully supported by the library collection as noted in the Library Borrowing Policy. Students will have access to NRAO subscriptions while working on site under NRAO IP addresses. Students will be expected to seek per article purchases and ILL support from their home institutions, except summer students who are temporary NRAO staff. General reference questions will be accepted though they may ultimately result in directing the student to outside resources as needed.

2.3 NSF

The NSF makes infrequent queries of the library, either directly or through the Director's Office, for NRAO documents and bibliometrics. These requests will always receive highest priority. If NSF staff contact the library directly, the library will inform the Director's Office as a courtesy.

2.4 Astronomy Community

The NRAO Library is active in two specific online communities important to the broader astronomy world: PAM and Astrolib. PAM, or the Physics Astronomy Math Division of SLA is a vibrant community stretching across academic interests related to and including astronomy and composed of librarians and vendors from the academic and observatory worlds. Astrolib is an important resource for staying connected to sister observatories around the globe.

Both communities are underpinned by listservs that NRAO maintains. The library remains actively engaged on many levels in these groups and will respond to reference and professional queries posed in them as appropriate, excluding the provision of for-purchase and subscription materials.

2.5 General Public

NRAO receives occasional reference queries from the general public. Most frequently, these queries tend to pertain to the NRAO image gallery, to be general questions from students about the NRAO library, or are on topics that are best addressed by the NRAO “Ask An Astronomer” resource. The library will respond to general queries in the most appropriate manner possible but without replacing services people should be seeking from their local or institutional libraries. Whenever appropriate, librarians will redirect queries to more authoritative resources like “Ask An Astronomer”.

3 RESPONSE TIME

Whenever possible, librarians will respond to all requests within 24 business hours. If any additional time is required to fulfill a request, the reference seeker will be notified of the reasonable timeline to complete their request and the actions the library will be taking to do so.