By Erika Johnson   Oct 01, 2020

Q&A: How to Access Library Services

UC San Diego's fall plan continues to evolve, informed by the university's Return to Learn program. We invited students, faculty and staff to submit their questions about how they can access library services while Library facilities are temporarily closed due to COVID-19, including curbside pickup options, how to connect to electronic reserves via the campus VPN, and how librarians can help launch research projects and inform remote instruction. Audrey Geisel University Librarian Erik Mitchell shares details about maintaining the flow of information as the fall quarter begins.

**Q. Is Geisel Library or the Biomedical Library Building open?**

A. For the safety and well-being of our community, Geisel Library and the Biomedical Library Building are temporarily closed until further notice—however a great many of our services and resources are available online. We recognize that a large percentage of UC San Diego students are learning remotely this fall, so everything we're doing strives to ensure that they have access to instruction and information similar to what they would have had if they were on campus.

Depending on demand and our ability to execute safely, we may be able to offer some type of study hall experience in the Biomedical Library Building during fall quarter. We are working closely with the Emergency Operations Center and other campus partners to make sure we set that up in a safe and effective way.

Q. How can students check out books, course reserves and other technology equipment?

A. Current library cardholders may use our new contactless Curbside Pickup Service for library-owned items, including books, as well as select technology and other items. While many course reserve items are available electronically, because print reserves will not be offered this fall, many former reserve

items are also available for standard checkout. UC San Diego students, faculty and staff can use the Library's online catalog Roger to submit requests for eligible materials. Most items are available for pickup within two business days. Contact us with any questions about circulation, reserves, or billing.
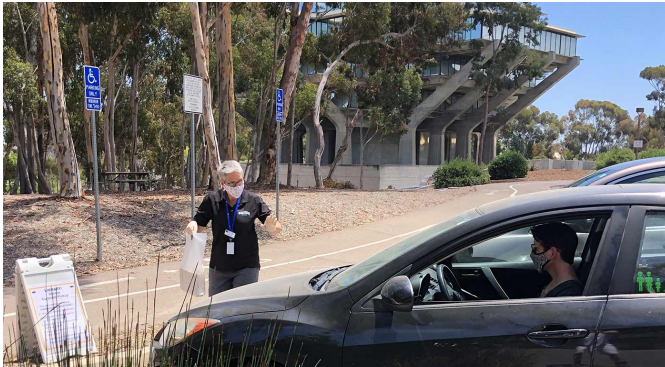
Students, faculty and staff can also request scanned chapters of items from most of the Library's print collection free of charge. Requests will be delivered electronically to the email address provided within three business days of submission.

Q. What Library resources are available online?

A. We are working to make as many of our resources available online as possible. For example, although we are not offering print reserves this fall, we have expanded our support for electronic reserves. We also offer over 13 million books electronically through HathiTrust Digital Library and a wide range of journal databases available to any UC San Diego student, faculty and staff member.

In addition to our standard scanning service, the other offering we've been working diligently to deliver is on-demand digitization for specialized content that we cannot provide in any other way. Sometimes, there's content that's not already available electronically and can't be purchased in electronic form. For these cases, we have a small group of staff working within the Library to digitize that content when someone needs it. The perfect example of this is our Special Collections & Archives. Those are, by definition, items that no one else owns, so I'm really excited to have our teams available to support researchers' access to those collections.

To access any online materials, you need to login to the campus Virtual Private Network (VPN). We have a step-by-step guide on our website here.

Q. How can the campus community return their borrowed items?

A. Since March, we extended the due date for items to Sept. 30 so people didn't have to return them in those first months of the Library's closure. Due dates will no longer be extended, so check your Library account for the current due date of your items or to request renewal of items. Students, faculty and staff can now return any items they have borrowed through the Library book drops located in the Hopkins circle near Geisel Library, as well as at the front entrance of Geisel Library. Do not return items to the book returns outside the Biomedical Library Building, which are not currently open. Direct any questions about returns, renewals, billing, or borrowing to LibraryBorrowing@ucsd.edu.

Q. Are books and other materials disinfected upon return?

A. The Institute of Museum and Library Services, a national library government agency, has studied how long we needed to quarantine print resources to make sure the virus does not transmit from one user to the other. That research found that a quarantine of seven days ensures that the virus isn't viable. We quarantine all of our materials for slightly more than that, just to add a little bit of a window. Library staff also wear masks and gloves when handling collection materials.

Q. Who can request help from a librarian, and what services do they provide?

A. Users can get real-time online research assistance through our 24/7 online chat service, FAQs page, or email, or they may schedule a consultation with a subject specialist. The 24/7 chat service is staffed by a network of local and national librarians, while email is staffed exclusively by UC San Diego librarians. This is a great first place for UC San Diego students, faculty and staff to go to with any question. The campus community can also schedule a consultation with a librarian here.

Our librarians also regularly provide guidance to students to support their research, including how to gain access to information, resources and designing a research project. They also help students understand how to critically evaluate the information they find, how to ask an effective research question and how to go about investigating that question or thesis.

Faculty are also supported through the Teaching + Learning Commons, where they can find resources to help them design online courses, as well as Educational Technology Services for technical support with Canvas, video and podcasts.

Q. How many librarians does our campus have?

A. UC San Diego has about 60 librarians, who partner with several hundred others across the UC system in a variety of ways. Many of them specialize in a subject discipline and support a particular set of departments or a division. We also employ library professionals with research methodology expertise, for example, focusing on geographic informational system research or data science research. Students, faculty and staff can find a subject specialist on our webpage here.

The librarians have also written library guides for research on thousands of different topics. It's been a great way for our librarians to identify new resources that are available in the context of the pandemic, or even to share emerging information that has been published to help scholars research topics related to COVID-19.

Have more questions? We invite the campus community to submit your inquiries online. A new Q&A with a Return to Learn expert will be published each Thursday in This Week @ UC San Diego for the next several weeks.

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