

Information Services

AFBI Library Defaulters Policy

Introduction

The Defaulters Policy has been created in order to set down the responsibilities of Library Services and users in terms of loans, fines and charges. This document has been produced to establish clear guidelines for all library service points, which is essential if users are to be treated fairly and consistently throughout the Library. By detailing the variety of methods that users can avail of to manage their loans and their library account, Library Services aims to encourage good library practice by users.

Users who have multiple borrowing cards (e.g. McClay or Biomedical Library) and who are in default on one, will be considered in default on each card.

Operating Principles

Loans

- Books borrowed from the Library must be returned by the due date.
- A book on loan remains the responsibility of the user until it is removed from their library account. Users can check their record with My Account via the AFBI Library Online website (<http://www.afbiblib.qub.ac.uk/myAccount>)
- All loan items are subject to recall; a book will be considered to be in demand if required by more than one user at any one time, and will be available for loan for one week only. If kept beyond this period, it will incur a fine at the agreed rate.
- A user, on receiving notice that a book on loan to him/her is required by another user, must return that book to the Library by the date stipulated in the notice.

Overdues and invoices

- Users will be considered to be in default if, within a reasonable time and without lodging an objection, they fail to (a) return any overdue book, (b) return any book recalled by the Library or (c) pay the charge incurred.
- Users who are in default will, after a third overdue warning, have their Library account suspended. The block will suspend the user's Library Account and will prevent them from borrowing, renewing or requesting material from the Library.
- AFBI staff will be referred to the AFBI Librarian for further action.

Fines

- Fines will be charged on overdue books from QUB libraries. Fines rates can be found on the QUB website at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/TheLibrary/UsingtheLibrary/AccessingLibraryResources/FinesandCharges/>. For payment of fines and charges, please contact your AFBI Library branch <http://www.afbiblib.qub.ac.uk/Contacts/> .
- Users with outstanding fines which exceed an agreed amount will have their Library Account suspended and will not be allowed to borrow, renew or request further books or material until the fines are paid. The AFBI Librarian shall have the power to remit or reduce fines in a particular case.
- Users will be considered to be in default if, within a reasonable time and without lodging an objection, they fail to pay the fine incurred.
- Charges not paid within a reasonable time will be referred to the AFBI Librarian for further action.

Fines - The Library's Responsibilities

A large number of items are regularly out of circulation because they are overdue. AFBI Library strives to make items available and accessible to those who need them.

In order to assist users in managing their loans, the Library communicates with them regularly about their loans. Communications include:

- reminder notices
 - These alert users to the imminent due date of their loans. This is only available to users with a valid email address in their record.
- overdue notices
 - These alert users to the fact that their books are now overdue and that they should be returned or renewed as soon as possible. The third overdue notice results in an automatic block being applied to the user account which prevents users from borrowing, renewing or requesting material from the Library.
- invoices
 - An invoice will be issued for the replacement cost of the book plus an administration charge if the user fails to return the book within an agreed time after the due date.
 - As a courtesy, the Library will endeavour to contact users to inform them that an invoice has been raised.
 - The Library will consider a replacement copy of the book instead of payment of the invoice. This should be discussed and agreed between the user and the Librarian prior to the copy being purchased. This is at the discretion of and per the conditions set by the Librarian.

- The Library will endeavour to refund the replacement cost of the book, minus the administration charge, should the user pay the invoice and subsequently return the item within one working week.
- The administration charge is an overhead charge for the production of the invoice and the overdue fine.
- unpaid invoices
 - In the event that a library user fails to return or pay for the replacement cost of the book and the matter remains unresolved at 30 days after the date of the initial invoice, the Library will contact the user again.
 - If the matter remains unresolved at 60 days after the date of the initial invoice, it will be referred to the AFBI Librarian.

Fines - The Users' Responsibilities

Users who borrow material also have responsibilities to the Library and fellow users. The following services are available to help them avoid fines.

- My Account via the AFBI Library Online (<http://www.afbilib.qub.ac.uk/myAccount>)
 - By being able to view what items are on loan to them and the due dates, users can effectively manage their loans and library account.
- Renewing books up to current renewal limits
 - Provided the item is not required by another user, there are a number of options for renewing books: in person, by telephone, by email, and via the My Account facility on the AFBI Online website.
- All items are subject to recall if required by another user in which case they will be due back by the date stipulated in the notice, and certain items may not be renewed or requested.

Enforcing the Policy

AFBI Library will take the following actions if users are in default.

- Loans
 - An automatic block will be placed on the users account if s/he fails to return or renew the overdue books, which will prevent them from borrowing, renewing or requesting material from the Library.
 - The Library will charge for the replacement cost of the book plus an administration charge if the book has not been returned within an agreed time after the due date.
 - The Library will consider a replacement copy of the book instead of payment of the invoice. This should be discussed and agreed between the user and the Librarian prior to the copy being purchased. This is at the discretion of and

per the conditions set by the Librarian.

- Fines for QUB books
 - The fine on an overdue book starts to accumulate on the day after it is due for return.

- Charges
 - An automatic block will be placed on users with fines which exceed an agreed amount, which will prevent them from borrowing, renewing or requesting material from the Library.
 - Users with fines which exceed an agreed amount will not have Inter-Library Loan requests processed.
 - staff will be referred to the Librarian for further action.

Dealing with Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, AFBI Library may

- waive or part-waive fines.
 - Such decisions have to be recorded to comply with audit requirements and will be closely monitored.
- renew items beyond the current renewal limits.

Such decisions are at the discretion of the AFBI Librarian or by any other person nominated by such.