

Circulation Policy

Mercer University Libraries has a large collection of print, media, course reserves, and other resources for Mercer students, faculty, staff, and other patrons as defined in the library's community patron policy.

Loan Periods

- Students
 - Books and Sound Recordings: 90 days with 1 renewal
 - Video: 7 days with 1 renewal
 - Equipment: Loan length and renewal policy vary by item
 - Maximum items allowed: 50
- Staff and Faculty
 - Books and Sound Recordings: 120 with 2 renewals
 - Video: 14 days with 1 renewal
 - Equipment: Loan length and renewal policy vary by item
 - Maximum items allowed: Unlimited
- Community Borrowers
 - Books and Sound Recordings: 28 days with 1 renewal
 - Video loans not permitted
 - Equipment loans not permitted
 - Maximum items allowed: 10

Holds

Mercer Libraries¹ patrons may place circulating items on hold if the item is checked out or located at another campus library.

Only books and media can be placed on hold. Items are held for 10 days (about 1 and a half weeks) and then returned if not picked up by the patron. The maximum number of holds is 20 items at the same time.

Items on hold may not be renewed.

Recalls

¹ While circulating items are available on a first come, first served basis, patrons of the Monroe F. Swilley Library (Atlanta) may request a circulating item from the stacks. Patrons may request items by phone, email, or virtual chat. After the item is retrieved by library staff, it will be placed on the 48-hour hold shelf behind the Service Desk.

Items may not be recalled. In special circumstances, faculty may request a recall from the Public Services Librarian. Urgent needs must be demonstrated. The Public Services Librarian (Tarver) and the Director of Swilley Library (Swilley, Douglas, Henry) retains the right to refuse.

Fines and Lost Items

The Library does not charge fines for overdue print and audio/visual materials. When items are deemed lost, patrons are charged \$75 per item or the replacement cost if the item exceeds \$75. If the item is found and returned, the lost item charge will be waived. If fees are paid for, and the item is later found, no refunds will be issued. Replacement copies purchased by the patron will not be accepted. Equipment and reserves do accrue daily fines, depending on the item policy. If equipment is declared lost, the patron will be responsible for replacement costs. A 2-week grace period is extended to patrons where they can return equipment and replacement fees will be waived. Patrons are still responsible for overdue fines. Once the grace period ends, the patron is responsible for the replacement fee.

Fines and Fees

DVD/VHS	\$1.00 per day, per item
3-Hour Reserves/Library Use Only	\$1.00 per hour, per item
Overnight Reserves	\$1.00 per hour, per item
1-day Reserves	\$1.00 per day, per item
3-day Reserves	\$1.00 per day, per item
1-week Reserves	\$1.00 per day, per item
Equipment	\$5.00 per hour, per hourly item \$25.00 per day, per daily item

Lost or Damaged Items

Keys	\$7.00 fine for a lost study room key
Lost Books, Sound Recordings, DVD/VHS/CDs	\$75.00
Equipment	Fees depend on type of equipment and scope of damage determined by the Public Services Librarian.

Damaged Items

Items are monitored for quality and accessibility. Patrons are responsible for keeping items in the condition in which they were received. If damage occurs, patrons should notify the Circulation Desk immediately. If it is determined that damage was caused by patron negligence, patron will be held responsible for the replacement fee for the items.

Examples of patron-caused damage:

- Spilled liquids or food
- Defacement
- Pest infestation

Replacement copies purchased by patrons will not be accepted.

Patron Record Holds and Library Privileges

Students with fees of \$75 or more will have their library accounts blocked and holds placed on their registration and transcript requests. Holds will be removed after payment is confirmed by the Accounting Office. Students who are unable to pay the full amount should speak with the Public Services Librarian. Fines may be paid down (below \$75 threshold) per the discretion of the Public Services Librarian. Pay down does not apply to replacement fees. Waive requests must be in writing and approved by the Public Services Librarian (Tarver) or the Director of Swilley Library (Swilley, Douglas, Henry).

Patrons with fines exceeding \$500 will be directed to the Public Services Librarian (Tarver) or the Director of Swilley Library (Swilley, Douglas, Henry) to discuss repayment options and further steps.

Claimed Return

If the library has a record of material checked out to a patron that the patron believes that have returned, the patron may initiate a “Claimed Return Procedure.” While library staff search for the material, the items will remain on the account during the search process and that patron will continue to receive overdue notifications. Patron record holds will not be placed during this period.

Distance Learner

Mercer students whose primary residence (9 months of the year or more) is more than a hundred miles from the nearest Mercer University Library, may qualify for distance learner lending. A patron may request print items (per the distance lending procedure) to be sent to their home address for the standard loan period. Prior to loaning material, efforts will be made to purchase said material in a digital format per the [PDA policy](#). Only items that cannot be purchased digitally will be sent. Reserves, reference, equipment, and AV resources are excluded. Items will be sent via Media Mail and patrons will be responsible for returning shipping costs.

Interlibrary Loan Subsidy

Interlibrary Loan (ILL) is a service that provides access to resources and materials that cannot be found in Mercer University Libraries. This service utilizes libraries and other information institutions from across the globe to connect patrons with library materials.

ILL is different than requesting books between campuses. Intercampus loans are made within Mercer University Libraries (Swilley, Tarver, Douglas RAC, Henry RAC)

Mercer University Libraries utilizes Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system to ensure the accessibility of patron research. The Mercer University Libraries' ILL department makes every effort to find materials at no cost to the borrower. However, sometimes it is impossible to find items at no charge. As of the 2023-24 academic year, the University Library will pay up to \$40 of any borrowing charges.

Below is an explanation of the charges involved with ILL and how the library supports University research while remaining fiscally responsible.

Sources of Charges

Shipping Charges: Most libraries will simply pass along shipping charges. Those are only very rarely over \$40. However, for large items from overseas, there are exceptional shipping rates.

Processing Charges: Other libraries charge a processing fee. Mercer University Libraries make every effort to avoid institutions that levy processing charges.

Copyright Royalties

- Mercer University Libraries interlibrary loan office operates under a policy known as the “rule of five.”
 - This means the institution can borrow five articles from the last five years of a journal at no charge. If the institution borrows six or more articles, those from the sixth onward are subject to copyright royalties.
- How much are copyright royalties? These are up to the publisher. Some are low per-page charges, while others have a flat fee per article, and still others charge a per-article fee plus a per-page charge.
 - Mercer University Libraries average copyright charge is under \$40.

What happens when there is a charge?

If the ILL office runs into a circumstance where it costs more than \$40 to acquire an item, an email will be sent to the patron:

- The patron can elect to pay the difference. MUL will place this charge on your library patron record, which you must pay before MUL will deliver your item.
 - Example: If it costs the library \$45 to deliver your item, the library will pay \$40, and you will need to pay University Libraries \$5.
- The patron can elect not to pay. In this case, the library will cancel your request. If you would like assistance in finding alternative or additional materials, please contact a librarian at library_reference@mercer.edu.

Circulation Privacy

Mercer University Libraries strives to protect the privacy of all patrons in compliance with federal and state laws, as well as professional standards. Basic patron privacy dictates an individual's right to read anonymously. As a result, library staff members hold in confidence all information about individual library users and their choices of resources and materials. Mercer University Libraries will not reveal personally identifiable information of patrons or reveal what information sources or services they consult.

Reasons for disclosure include:

- Being required by search warrant or subpoena.
- If there is a substantiated reason to believe that violation of law or University policies have taken place
- When failure to act might result in significant bodily harm or property loss

This policy applies to all resources regardless of format or means of delivery and all services offered by Mercer University Libraries. This policy abides by the following:

Rights of Library Users (issued by the American Library Association)

Lack of privacy and confidentiality has a chilling effect on users' selection, access to, and use of library resources. All users have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use. ALA and its members recognize that children and youth have the same rights to privacy as adults. Library users expect, and in many places have, a legal right to have their personally identifiable information and library-use data protected and kept private and confidential by anyone with access to that information. Libraries should never enact policies or practices that abridge users' right to privacy regardless of their age, ability, housing status, immigration status, involvement with the criminal justice system, religious affiliation, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other forms of identity or status unless explicitly required by law. Even then, libraries should consult with legal counsel before abridging any user's right to privacy.

Libraries have a responsibility to inform users about policies and practices governing the collection, security, and retention of personally identifiable information and library use data.

Additionally, users should have the choice to opt-in to any data collection that is not essential to library operations and the opportunity to opt-out again at any future time. All nonessential data collection should be turned off by default. In all areas of librarianship, best practice leaves users in control of as many choices as possible regarding their privacy. This includes decisions about the selection of, access to, and use of information. Information about options available to users should be prominently displayed, accessible, and understandable for a general audience.

State of Georgia Law (O.C.G.A. § 24-12-30, current as of 4/14/21)

(a) Circulation and similar records of a library which identify the user of library materials shall not be public records but shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except:

- (1) To members of the library staff in the ordinary course of business.
- (2) Upon written consent of the user of the library materials or the user's parents or guardian if the user is a minor or ward; or
- (3) Upon appropriate court order or subpoena.

(b) Any disclosure authorized by subsection (a) of this Code section, or any unauthorized disclosure of materials made confidential by subsection (a) of this Code section shall not in any way destroy the confidential nature of that material, except for the purpose for which an authorized disclosure is made. A person disclosing material as authorized by subsection (a) of this Code section shall not be liable therefor.