3.8.2 Instruction of library use

3.8.2 The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative

The University of Alabama (UA) provides regular access to in-person and online instruction in its Libraries. The Libraries support the research and teaching mission of the University by teaching students to think critically; to locate resources for academic, professional, and personal pursuits; and to evaluate resources. Faculty librarians and trained staff deliver instruction and reference assistance at multiple service points across the campus. Instruction is offered on demand and through scheduled classes and appointments.

The University Libraries system comprises five main units:

- Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library
- Angelo Bruno Business Library
- Special Collections (W.S. Hoole Special Collections and the A.S. Williams III Americana Collections)
- McLure Education Library
- Eric and Sarah Rodgers Library for Science and Engineering.

Gorgas Library, the largest library in the system, serves the humanities and social sciences. In addition to its core collections, it houses two discrete collections:

- Music Library
- A.S. Williams III Americana Collection.

Several additional campus libraries and discipline-based reading rooms operate independently, but work collaboratively with the UA Libraries system:

- Bounds Law Library
- Social Work Library
- Health Sciences Library
- Map Library and Place Names Research Center
- Frances S. Summersell Library, Women’s Resource Center
- Winter Reading Room in the College of Communication and Information Sciences.
Overview

Each of the campus libraries delivers instruction in the use of its materials in a variety of formats, targeting multiple populations in diverse settings. In all cases, library instruction is designed to support the core educational goals of the University:

- Advance the University’s academic, research, scholarship and service priorities, consistent with a top-tier university, and continue to promote growth and national prominence in these areas.
- Enhance the teaching, research, and service mission of the University by retaining and recruiting outstanding faculty and staff.
- Enhance the University’s learning environment to attract and retain excellent students. In addition to traditional instruction in the classroom or through individual reference encounters, the Libraries in recent years have engaged new media formats in an effort to reach students and faculty at the specific time and place of need. These new formats include:
  - Online tutorials [1]
  - FAQ [2]
  - Social media [3]
  - Instant messaging [4]
  - Podcasts [5]
  - Email reference services [8]
  - Comprehensive set of online subject and course LibGuides. [9]

Together, these initiatives have permitted the Libraries to serve wide audiences, including off-campus and distance education students, [10] disabled students, [11] and non-traditional students who may have limited access to campus.

Staffing for Reference and Instruction

Each of the Libraries maintains one or more staffed service points within the building for immediate assistance. Reference librarians, library staff, or trained graduate student assistants provide these services. The hours of service are extensive and include evenings and weekends. [12] Names and contact information for subject liaisons [13] are listed on the Libraries’ website and on subject LibGuides. [14] Subject librarians are available for both formal classroom instruction and informal individual research consultations. Faculty may use an online form [15] [16] to schedule an instruction session, or they may contact their liaison directly. Students may schedule a research consultation via a Web form, [17] through an information desk referral, or through direct contact with a subject liaison. Reference librarians also monitor the online Ask-A-Librarian email service [18] and the Libraries’ social media presence.
Learning Spaces

Most formal library instruction sessions are taught in the Libraries’ interactive classrooms. Gorgas Library has two classrooms that also function as open computer labs when classes are not scheduled. Each accommodates 24 students and is equipped with student and instructor computers, which allow for a combination of group demonstration and individual hands-on learning. McLure Education Library has two instruction rooms. One is equipped with a digital podium, projector, whiteboard, and SMART board and accommodates 26 students. The second instruction room accommodates 40 students. Bruno Business Library has one dedicated instruction room with 20 PCs and an instructor’s podium, and can accommodate 40 students. The Scholars Lab in Rodgers Library serves as both an instruction space and open computing facility when classes are not being taught. It accommodates 15 students and is equipped with an overhead projector and an instructor’s station. W.S. Hoole Library and the Williams Americana collection have open spaces where librarians can introduce students to primary source materials in a reading room environment. When appropriate, librarians travel to campus classrooms or computer labs to address larger groups.

Two digital media labs in Gorgas Library, the Sanford Media Center [19] for undergraduates and the Alabama Digital Humanities Center [20] for graduate students and faculty, provide software and hardware for digital media production. Each lab has a dedicated staff. Both offer instruction and support services tailored to individual project needs. The computers in the media labs and in some public work spaces are equipped with a vast array of academic software. [21] Functioning as collaborative learning environments, these media labs provide innovative interdisciplinary learning opportunities for both faculty and students.

Some spaces within the Libraries have been reconfigured in recent years to maximize student exposure to information services and to facilitate group projects. These areas have flexible, modular furniture and are located near service desks so that students working individually or in groups have ready access to reference staff.

Instructional Programming

All libraries provide library instruction for University classes, whether online, off campus, or on campus. The number of instructional sessions and the number of students served have kept steady pace with rising enrollments. From academic year 2009–10 to 2012–13, the number of instructional sessions taught by Gorgas Library and the Science, Business, and Education Libraries rose from 482 to 872. The number of students served rose from 10,751 to 18,937. During this same period, the number of sessions for all libraries, including the Law, Health Sciences, Social Work, Special Collections, Map, and Communications Libraries and reading rooms rose from 581 to 971. The total number of students taught rose from 11,917 to 19,506.

Table 1 Number of Instruction Sessions and Students by Academic Year – All Libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>No. of Class Sessions</th>
<th>No. of Students Instructed</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>% Change Classes</th>
<th>% Change Students Instructed</th>
<th>% Change Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009–10</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>11,917</td>
<td>28,807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–11</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>13,158</td>
<td>30,232</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–12</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>14,840</td>
<td>31,747</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012–13</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>19,506</td>
<td>33,602</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall increase</td>
<td>+390</td>
<td>+7,589</td>
<td>+4,795</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>+17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The increase in instruction and outreach is due in no small part to initiatives in Gorgas Information Services to reach departments as well as to improve teaching techniques by training librarians in pedagogical methods, creating lesson plans, and rubrics. Librarians actively participate in the development of these materials in collaboration with teaching faculty.
Gorgas Information Services Librarians also developed a series of podcasts called Keys to the Capstone, which focus on information literacy skills and have accompanying quizzes. The quizzes are used in instruction and for follow up, and are embedded in Blackboard. A new series is being updated that is aimed specifically at distance education and online learners. Librarians also engage in peer review of teaching. Colleagues within the Information Services Department volunteer to observe one another and offer feedback to improve teaching techniques. This is not a part of formal evaluations, but contributes to improving instruction and creating an ongoing dialogue about best practices.

Several initiatives provide more in-depth instruction than is possible in a single library session:

- **Freshman Writing Program** Gorgas Library now offers freshman writing students a two-session sequence that focuses on search strategies and evaluation of scholarly resources. Assigned video tutorials supplement the classroom, as does LibGuide content, and worksheets. Librarians are testing methods to establish more sustained contact with students by embedding library guides, podcasts, and assessment exercises directly into Blackboard Learn shells. In the spring 2013 term, 123 Freshman Writing sections – 81% of all sections – participated in this library instruction program.

- **Graduate Chemistry Course** In fall 2013, the chemistry librarian in Rodgers Library taught a three-credit-hour course, CH 570 Literature and Communication in Graduate Chemistry. The course is required for all graduate students in chemistry and promises to become a standard part of the University’s graduate chemistry curriculum.

- **Bruno Business Library** Business librarians used online tutorials to reach large numbers of students in multi-section courses. In collaboration with Undergraduate Student Services in the College of Commerce and Business Administration (C&BA), the library embedded a library tutorial and quiz in the Blackboard Learn shells of 16 of 24 sections of GBA 145, a UA Compass course. The library has partnered with faculty to offer another version of the tutorial in sections of MKT 300, a core curriculum course, and in selected other C&BA courses.

**Instructional Outreach**

In recent years, the Libraries found new ways to engage students and faculty. Many of these initiatives transcend the traditional library classroom and reference desk setting, and many require collaboration with other academic and student service units on campus. Listed here are some notable programs that have succeeded in expanding and redefining library instruction.

- **Week of Welcome** At the beginning of the fall term, Gorgas Library coordinates events relating to the UA’s “Week of Welcome.” Recent programs included tours, library challenges, exhibits, receptions, and a creative “Introduce Yourself to the Library” program, in which students used a webcam to record their expectations about library services.

- **Lunch ‘n’ Learn Undergraduate/Graduate Workshop Series** Another Gorgas Library program, this series provides instruction for timely resources such as RefWorks, Zotero, LinkedIn, WordPress, and HTML, as well as information on the Cloud, the Deep Web, and new library databases.

- **Research Rescue** Offered by Gorgas librarians beginning in the middle of each term, Research Rescue guarantees immediate, in-depth reference assistance for final course papers and projects.

- **Super Searcher** This Libraries-wide contest experimented with teaching database search skills in a challenging, game-like setting.

- **Traveling Librarians** Librarians in history, music, and communications have taken reference services to academic departments and residence halls as a way to engage students at the point of need.

- **Library Fair** Librarians routinely attend graduate-student orientations and in the Fall Semester 2013 introduced a Library Fair, which addressed the more advanced research needs of graduate students and faculty.

- **Vendor Workshops** The Libraries hosted both live and online instruction sessions provided by database vendors to promote newly acquired electronic resources to campus researchers. For example, following the
acquisition of Sabin Americana, 1500–1926, the library and vendor partnered for a lunch and learn session on the features of this full-text electronic resource. Similar sessions have taken place following the acquisition of major e-book holdings from Springer.

- RefWorks Librarians provide instruction and support for RefWorks, [35] the University’s licensed bibliographic management software.
- Undergraduate Research Prize This library competition for outstanding undergraduate research projects allows the libraries to showcase the work of exceptional students and the library resources that support their efforts.
- Learning Partners Gorgas Library provides satellite space for the University’s Writing Center [36] and the Center for Academic Success. [37] Bringing these services together in one building provides opportunities for team work and reinforces a holistic understanding of academic success. The Library also partners with Student Affairs, Continuing Studies and departments in Academic Affairs to provide instruction and special sessions for a growing number of summer programs, including Boys and Girls State, N-soro programs, [38] Sibling Orientation, [39] Early College, [40] [41] and community groups.
- International Student Outreach The Libraries’ liaison for international students coordinates activities with the Capstone International Center to promote library literacy for international students. The Libraries participate in international student orientations, maintain online library guides for international students, [42] host programs in conjunction with International Education Week, [43] [44] [45] [46] and each term sponsor one of the Capstone International Center’s weekly coffee hours.
- Get Smart! Workshops Bruno Library offers a “Get Smart! Workshop” series [47] during the fall and spring terms. The workshops are independent of specific courses, but support C&BA teaching and learning by taking a topical approach to training students in the use of business databases.
- Peer-to-Peer Consultations The Sanford Media Center offers “Peer-to-Peer Consultations,” [48] a unique instruction program that allows student employees to share their software expertise with fellow students in a structured, but informal, setting.
- 3-D Printing Librarians and staff members in the Rodgers Library offer both individual and group instruction in 3-D printing. [49] Located in the Rodgers Library, the 3-D printer offers technology of interest to faculty and students in science, engineering, art, interior design, and more. From November 2012 through March 2014, the library trained 392 users in 24 departments.

Program Evaluation

- Gorgas Library Students in library sessions for Freshman Writing courses generally complete a written worksheet at the end of the session to test their knowledge. These worksheets are graded by the instruction librarians according to a collaboratively developed rubric. The instruction librarians then gather once each term to evaluate the worksheets, to gauge consistency in their presentations, and to reevaluate the instruction program. Recent assessments revealed some points of confusion for students, e.g., keyword selection for database searching and the difference between scholarly and popular material. The instruction team adjusted the program to address these issues. The department also has a generic survey, [50] which is used to assess outreach programs, such as Gorgas Library’s “Lunch ’n’ Learn” series.
- Sanford Media Center In 2012, the SMC undertook a comprehensive program assessment that garnered more than 200 survey responses. [51] The Center conducted focused analyses as well, studying, for example, the value of the Center’s outreach program to the high school siblings of current freshmen, and of the “Peer-to-Peer Consultations.” These assessment projects contributed to the Center’s planning process, highlighting the need for increased outreach to graduate students, continuing emphasis on in-person versus online support, and a more extensive program of video production instruction.
- Rodgers Library Feedback from instructors and students in the inaugural term of CH 570 will be used to further develop the course. Assessment results revealed a need to cover basic as well as advanced research skills. Assessment has likewise been conducted for the 3-D printing program. Here the results showed a need for instruction in modeling and design as well as basic 3-D printing skills.
Independent Libraries and Reading Rooms

- Bounds Law Library Law students receive instruction in legal research and law library use through the course of their three-year program. During the first year of law school, reference librarians teach legal research classes to all students. Instruction covers traditional print and microform materials as well as online resources such as Westlaw or Lexis. The library also uses online tutorial services such as CALI.

  [52] Research instruction continues for second and third year students in a variety of settings, for example: teachable moments at the reference desk, a course in Advanced Legal Research, special instructional sessions for law journal staff and faculty research assistants, and online research guides. [53] Students enrolled in the law school’s distance learning tax and business law programs receive instruction in library resources and research techniques during on-campus orientations. Student evaluations are conducted in legal research courses; the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs reviews the results.

- Social Work Reading Room The Social Work librarian serves approximately 650 students, 36 regular faculty, and 20 adjuncts. The librarian provides reference and instruction in person and online to serve both campus students and distance education students enrolled in the online MSW program.

- William E. Winter Reading Room & Learning Commons, College of Communication & Information Sciences To support teaching, research, and outreach, the Reading Room librarian offers informal and scheduled one-on-one meetings with students requesting assistance. Also available are discussion tours of the space and introductory overview meetings with students in a formal class structure.

Conclusion

UA Libraries support and facilitate learning in a variety of ways. Through instruction sessions, tutorials and research guides, librarians assist students and faculty in expanding their knowledge of information resources to support academic, professional, and personal pursuits. UA Libraries assure access to all affiliated users through in-person and online means. Access to timely and regular instruction is a cornerstone of the service provided by the libraries across campus.

Supporting Documents

1. Library Online Tutorials (PDF)
   Full Document Website

2. Library FAQ (PDF)
   Full Document Website

3. Library Social Media (PDF)
   Full Document Website

4. Ask a Librarian (PDF)
   Full Document Website

5. Library Podcasts (HTML)
   Full Document Website

6. Library Blogs (PDF)
   Full Document Website

7. McLure Library Blog (PDF)
   Full Document Website

8. Email a Librarian (PDF)
   Full Document Website
9. Library Guides (PDF) 
   Full Document Website

10. Distance Learners (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

11. Disability Services (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

12. Library Hours (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

13. Library Directories (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

14. Subject Guides (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

15. Instruction Request (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

16. English Instruction Request (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

17. Research Consultation (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

18. Public Inquiry (PDF) 
    Full Document Website

19. Sanford Media Center (HTML)

20. Alabama Digital Humanities Center (HTML)

21. UA Library Software (HTML)

22. Session 1 Rubric (PDF)

23. Session 2 Rubric (PDF)

24. Library Guide for Classes (HTML)

25. Session 1 Worksheet (PDF)

26. Session 2 Worksheet (PDF)

27. CH 570 Syllabus (PDF)

28. Week of Welcome (PDF)

29. Cloud Training (PDF)

30. Deep Web Training (PDF)

31. Database Training (PDF)

32. Research Rescue (PDF)

33. Traveling Librarian (PDF)

34. Library Fair (PDF)

35. Ref Works (HTML)
36. Writing Center (HTML)
37. Center for Academic Success (HTML)
38. Alabama Reach (HTML)
39. Sibling Orientation (HTML)
40. Early College, Library Guide (HTML)
41. Early College (HTML)
42. International Student, Library Guide (HTML)
43. Mango Languages (PDF)
44. Brian Marlow Science Comedian (PDF)
45. Professor Robert Kanigel (PDF)
46. Colonel Michael Fincke, Astronaut (PDF)
47. Bruno Library, Get Smart (HTML)
48. Peer to Peer Consultations, Sanford Media Center (HTML)
49. 3D Printing (HTML)
50. Workshop Questionnaire (PDF)
51. SMC Media Center (PDF)
52. CALI (HTML)
53. Bounds Law Library (HTML)