

THE ALBERTA LIBRARY

Terms of Reference

Ask A Question Service Committee

Type of Committee

Service

Purpose

The Ask A Question Service Committee is established to provide advice to the Virtual Reference Librarian on the development of the Ask A Question virtual reference service, particularly with respect to new initiatives and when significant changes in the service are under consideration. The Committee is empowered to make decisions on initiatives and actions that are within the scope of their responsibility areas, within budget allocations and within the approved Business plan.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide advice on developments and issues related to the Ask A Question virtual reference service.
- Recommend strategic directions for the service, consistent with the goals and objectives of The Alberta Library.
- Act as sector representatives for those member libraries participating in the service.
- Liaise with those member libraries participating in the service in order to seek feedback on topics as required, and to communicate back to participating member libraries about outcomes and the work of the Committee.
- Share information with committee members about emerging trends and issues related to the service.
- Review proposed standards, guidelines and policies, ensuring that they reflect changing times and practice.
- Review and recommend funding models for the service.
- Participate in evaluation of the service.
- Recommend the establishment of project teams to assist in carrying out the work of the Committee, as needed.
- To provide written recommendations on matters of policy, financial implications and strategic directions for TAL's Ask A Question service.

Budget

- The annual budget for the Ask A Question Virtual Reference service will include an allocation for the Committee to conduct meetings and carry out its activities.
- Members are reimbursed for all meeting expenses.

Membership and Composition

- Members will be appointed by the TAL Executive Committee. Appointments will be made annually in January and will be for a two year term.
- The Committee shall appoint a Chair from amongst the members.
- The Ask A Question Service Committee may be chaired by the Virtual Reference Librarian, or by an individual selected by the members.
- The Committee will be composed of 5 to 6 members, who are representative of the types of libraries in TAL participating in the service. An ideal composition would be:
 - 2 post-secondary library participants
 - 2 regional library system participants
 - 2 public library node participants (mid-size and large library)
- Appointees to this committee must have a strong interest in virtual reference services, and will have an understanding of issues relating to reference services and / or virtual reference services.
- The Virtual Reference Librarian and Director, APLEN are ex-officio members.
- Other TAL staff may be resources to the Committee, as necessary.

Reports

- The TAL staff liaison is responsible for reporting on the work of the Committee.
- Meeting notes and other relevant documentation may be submitted to the TAL Executive through the Chief Executive Officer.
- Recommendations on matters related to policy, finances and strategic direction shall be provided to the Director, APLEN and the Chief Executive Officer by the TAL staff liaison to the Ask A Question Service Committee.

Meetings

- Meetings shall be held at least twice per year.
- There will be an all-coordinators meeting at least annually.
- Meetings shall be held at the call of the Virtual Reference librarian in consultation with the Chair.

Evaluation

The Committee's work will be compared annually against its Terms of Reference and workplan.