Library Instruction

The Library is committed to teaching students how to find and use information effectively. We offer instruction to groups and individuals through our program of classroom instruction, online learning, and research-by-appointment service.

Classroom Instruction

Professors can arrange course-related library instruction for their students. In consultation with the instructor, librarians tailor sessions to meet individual class requirements and assignments. Instruction in advanced research skills and specialized resources can also be arranged for upper-year and graduate classes. We can provide information literacy training to your TAs.

The following **Instruction Menu** lists the kinds of topics that can be covered in an instruction session. The list is not exhaustive, and the time needed is approximate. We are flexible: we can visit your classes more than once, for shorter or longer times, as requested. We are also available for evening and weekend classes and can provide hands-on instruction in computer labs (where available).

If you would like to book an instruction session or would like more information about our program, please contact Heather Sanderson (heather.sanderson@smu.ca; 902-420-5541). When scheduling a library session, please give as much advance notice as possible (preferably two weeks).

Instruction Menu: Topics & Time Requirements	
Introduction & Conclusion (required) • purpose of session, where/who to contact for further help, questions, etc.	5 minutes
Developing a Search Strategy • defining a research topic • identifying keywords, related words & synonyms	10 minutes
Scholarly Journals, "Popular" Magazines, and Trade Publications • hands-on look at scholarly and non-scholarly publications and the differences between them • discussion of "peer review"	10-15 minutes
Primary versus Secondary Sources • discussion of the differences between these types of sources	10 minutes
Searching Novanet/Catalogue Basics • book and journal searching • getting materials from other libraries • accessing your library account • "Live Help" service	15 minutes

Searching Databases (demonstration of basic search techniques) • keyword searching, combining search terms using AND and OR, basic limit and expand options, interpreting results, locating full-text articles	20 minutes (add 10 minutes for interactive activity and each additional database)
Searching Databases (demonstration of advanced search techniques) • basic search techniques (above) plus advanced search features such as thesaurus/descriptor searching, citation searching, saving searches and setting up alerts, exporting results to RefWorks, etc.	30 minutes (add 10 minutes for interactive activity and for each additional database)
Understanding Database Results/Deciphering Database Records • identifying elements of a citation; distinguishing between different types of sources	5 minutes (add 5 minutes for interactive activity)
Searching Statistical Databases • locating statistics using the Statistics Canada web site and various statistical and/or financial information databases	60-75 minutes
Searching the Internet and **Web Site Evaluation** • benefits and risks of the Web as an information source • search techniques for getting better results (e.g., Google Scholar) • discussion of how to identify credible web sites	20-30 minutes
Academic Integrity and **Avoiding Plagiarism** • interactive workshop that includes a discussion of the kinds of behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty, as well as tips for avoiding plagiarism	60-75 minutes
Citation Styles • importance of citing sources, location of citation guidelines (APA, MLA, etc.) • interactive workshop that includes practice exercises on citing	5 minutes 30 minutes for workshop
RefWorks (citation management tool) • brief introduction and demonstration • interactive workshop: hands-on practice with exporting and importing citations from databases, editing records, creating folders, formatting bibliographies, etc. (note: this workshop is dependent on availability of computer lab)	10 minutes 60-90 minutes for workshop

ResearchBase

A library assignment administered through Brightspace, *ResearchBase* introduces students to the basics of researching in an academic library. You can assign it for a portion of your students' grade. The assignment is comprised of a series of learning modules and online quizzes designed to teach students the skills they need to find materials for their research assignments and essays. Students

will learn how to define a topic, plan a search strategy, search for books and journals using the library catalogue, locate journal articles using a journal database, and evaluate search results. If you would like information about this instructional tool, please contact Cindy Harrigan (cindy.harrigan@smu.ca; 902-496-8789).

Tutorials and Help Guides

The Library has many tutorials and guides (http://www.smu.ca/academics/library-guides.html) available to help students learn about research resources in their subjects and develop their information skills. Feel free to link to them in your class materials or embed them in your Brightspace courses. We can show you how to do this. We are always developing new guides and tutorials. Please contact Heather (902-420-5541) or Cindy (902-496-8789) if you have any suggestions for a guide or tutorial you'd like us to develop or adapt.

 Individual Instruction

Individual assistance is available through the Library's **Research-by-Appointment** service. Both students and faculty may schedule appointments with a librarian for in-depth assistance in the use of the Library's research resources. Students may use this service to discuss specific research difficulties, database searching, or finding information for a topic or assignment. Please encourage your students to make use of this library support. Interested Faculty may wish to discuss with a librarian their research projects, new course proposals (and the resources available to support them), using RefWorks to organize sources, etc. We are also able to provide training to your research assistants. Appointments can be booked by calling the Library's Research Help Desk at 902-420-5544.