Research and Reference Policy

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**POLICY**

The York Region Law Association (YRLA) Librarians and Library Staff can provide answers to questions requiring a direct answer, such as requests for cases, legislation, commentary, factual information, or help in locating relevant legal resources. When asked legal questions, Library Staff will provide assistance in locating useful research materials, and guidance on how to best start researching the topic. The Librarian and/or Library Staff are available to provide research assistance and guidance on researching complex legal questions and research.

Librarians and Library Staff are unable to perform research on questions that require an in-depth understanding of the law. While Library Staff are available to advise on a research strategy and provide assistance in locating research materials; Library Staff cannot answer legal questions directly or indirectly and they cannot interpret legal statutes, codes or documents.

Library Staff are not qualified to give legal advice or opinions and as such, a Member making use of library services is solely responsible for reviewing any legal research, confirming the sufficiency thereof and rendering their own legal opinion.

The York Region Law Association, Librarians, Library Staff, other YRLA employees, Directors, and/or agents are not responsible for any damage, expense, negligence, act, omission, or loss of any kind arising from the research services that the Librarians or Library Staff provide or for the inability to provide research services at a particular time.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Anyone requesting research assistance from Library Staff should communicate the issues to be researched as clearly as possible to assist Library Staff in understanding the issue at hand.
2. Library Staff reserve the right to exercise sole discretion on whether to accept research assistance. Library Staff may refuse to provide research assistance to a library user if the research questions are inappropriate, or if the user is abusing this privilege, or taking up an inordinate amount of staff’s time.
3. Prior to the search, a discussion may be necessary to determine the key terminology, themes, and areas of law relevant to the issue at hand.
4. Library Staff will ordinarily spend approximately 1 hour searching for cases, per query.
5. Library Staff will generally spend no more than 3-4 hours researching complex research queries.
6. Library Staff are available to retrieve cases and legislation and send them via email.
7. Acknowledgment of a research or case request can be expected within 48 hours or less. Please note that Library Staff will make every effort to provide an answer as quickly as possible, but that response times may vary depending on the volume and nature of requests. Library Staff will do their best to communicate when an answer can be expected. Priority will be given to urgent requests as necessary, and so it is helpful to note if a member is working with a deadline or the request is urgent.