

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES POLICY: Circulation Policy

APPROVED BY: Management Group

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Circulation Policy

The Libraries are committed to providing the highest level of service possible in meeting the information needs of its constituent groups. This includes maintaining equitable circulation policies, including safeguarding privacy and providing for appeals on fines and suspension of borrowing privileges. The following circulation policies have been formulated and adopted to define valid borrowers of Libraries resources, to identify those resources which may be borrowed, and to ensure the availability of the resources to the borrowers in a reasonable and equitably controlled manner.

Borrower Categories

1. NIU academic staff: ranked, unranked, full- and part-time, visiting, adjunct, affiliate, emeritus, retired, and temporary faculty, and Supportive Professional Staff (SPS)
2. Enrolled NIU students: graduates, undergraduates, dissertation and theses candidates, at-large, and part-time
3. NIU operating staff employees: full-time, part-time, and retired
4. NIU Libraries courtesy card holders, including:
 - Alumni
 - Members of Friends of NIU Libraries
 - State of Illinois residents
 - Minors with parental consent
 - Visiting scholars and international visitors sponsored by an academic unit on campus
5. I-Share affiliates: faculty, students, and operating staff of other I-Share institutions

Valid Identification

To check out any library item, valid identification must be shown. The following forms of identification, when properly validated, are considered acceptable:

1. Valid NIU photo ID (“OneCard”) (students, staff, faculty)
2. Valid NIU Libraries courtesy card and a photo ID
3. Friends members must obtain a courtesy card
4. CARLI affiliates with a valid photo ID who are active in the CARLI I-Share patron database

Libraries units that request identification cards include:

- Any Library unit that circulates Libraries materials
- Libraries Security personnel

Borrowers are subject to all applicable local, state, and federal laws regarding false or misleading information. Using false identification in the Libraries may result in suspension of Libraries privileges and/or prosecution. (See Northern Illinois University Student Code of Conduct, Article 3, No. 4, Sections 10 and 14.) Furthermore, it is against University policy to use a NIU OneCard belonging to another for any purpose.

General Provisions

1. Library items are shelved primarily in open shelf areas, directly accessible to the users. Most materials may be checked out for use outside the library. Borrowers must fill out request forms for books located in basement storage. Conditions for use are set forth in the Circulation Loan Period Policies (see chart).
2. Pick-up of NIU items at NIU learning resource centers is only available to NIU faculty, staff, and students who are enrolled in or teaching at those campuses, and the Friends of NIU Libraries.
3. Borrowing privileges are not transferable; however, any NIU Library patrons who want to permit other NIU Library patrons to check out materials for them in their name may do so after completing a proxy form. Patrons who do so are responsible for the return of all materials and are expected to respond to all recall notices, lost item invoices, etc.
4. Borrowers are responsible for all items checked out and are expected to return materials to the appropriate service desks when due. Borrowers can create an I-Share account online to show current due dates and allow online renewals. I-Share is accessible from any computer with an Internet connection. Instruction in using this account is available from the reference desk or online from the online catalog link, if needed. As a courtesy, the Library sends two overdue notices before items are billed as lost; however, it remains the borrower’s responsibility to be aware of the dates items are due. Receipts for returned materials are given upon request.
5. NIU authorized patrons are responsible for updating their addresses with the Human Resources Office and/or Registration and Records, or they can update their through MyNIU online. Courtesy card patrons update their addresses at the Founders Library Circulation Desk.

6. Borrowers may be subject to charges for items checked out to their account that have a status of overdue, damaged, or lost.
7. There are no limitations placed on the number of items that most valid borrowers may check out. Courtesy-card borrowers are limited to ten items except for minors, who are limited to five items. High-end privilege courtesy card holders, Friends of NIU Libraries, and visiting scholars may check out an unlimited number of items.
8. Theft or mutilation of library materials or property is a criminal offense subject to disciplinary action by Northern Illinois University and/or criminal prosecution under State of Illinois laws.
9. A borrower in any category eligible to use interlibrary loan services is subject to circulation policies as specified under the CARLI consortium's I-Share Universal Borrowing Policies (August 4, 2010), and the University Libraries' Information Delivery Services policy.
10. The Library reserves the right to suspend borrowing privileges for abuses of circulation policies.
11. In accordance with the Library Records Confidentiality Act (Illinois Compiled Statutes 75/ILCS/70/): "The registration and circulation records of a library are confidential information. Except pursuant to a court order, no person shall publish or make any information contained in such records available to the public."

Renewals

Renewals of NIU items may be made in person at the circulation desk and through the online catalog via individual account. There is a limit on the number of times an NIU item can be renewed based on borrower category, recalls already applied to the item, and/or circulation policy violations by the patron. Generally, faculty, graduate, and Honors students may renew each item ten times. All other patrons may renew each item three times. For University Libraries loan periods by borrower category, see the online University Libraries' Circulation Loan Periods policy.

Criteria for Extended Suspension of Library Circulation Privileges

Repetitive problems with same patron, such as:

- Bill/credit cycle repeated 10 times within one year
- Returning items damaged or abused, including Reserves material
- Abuse of other I-Share libraries' circulation policies or materials
- Incorrect address information (resulting in inability to reach patron)
- Use of false identity

- Pattern of abusive behavior towards Library staff, documented in writing (only documented problems will be considered)
- Numerous unsuccessful attempts to communicate with the patron may result in a suspension of privileges

Patrons whose library privileges are suspended will be so informed in writing, when possible. They may appeal their suspension to an ad hoc committee consisting of the Dean of University Libraries, Associate Dean for Public Services, and the Chair of the Libraries Advisory Committee. Patrons have the right to review and respond to any relevant documentation, such as complaints from Library staff, in preparing their appeal.

Separation from NIU or extended suspension of library circulation privileges will result in the following actions:

- Recall of all items
- Suspension of borrowing privileges in CARLI I-Share

Recalls

All library items that are checked out are subject to recall for Reserves Services. When recalled, the loan period is reduced to an earlier date. A borrower who needs an item that is checked out should first try to obtain it from another CARLI I-Share institution through the online catalog or through interlibrary loan. When Reserves Services initiates a recall, the item must be returned within a two-week period.

Failure to respond to a recall notice may result in lost book-billing charges and/or suspension of borrowing privileges.

Charges for Lost, Damaged, and Overdue Items

Patrons who do not respond to overdue notices are subject to a two-stage billing process known as “lost-book” charges. An initial \$10 non-refundable fee is processed for each item that is billed, followed by a second bill for the balance (\$50) or the cost of the item, whichever is greater. Patrons will have up to 3 months from the date of the first invoice to return or renew the billed item(s) before the second bill is processed. Once billed, the initial billing cost for each item becomes non-refundable.

Borrowing privileges may be suspended at the time of billing; they will be reinstated upon credit/payment of all charges and return of items.

1. Damaged items: Borrowers may be billed for items that are returned damaged. Repair or replacement charges are determined by the Library Operations Associate or the Head of User Services.
2. Replacements-in-kind: In lieu of paying lost-book or replacement charges, an individual has the option of giving the library an in-kind replacement. The Head of User Services must agree to the replacement ahead of time, view the item upon its arrival, and give final approval. Replacements for lost or damaged media items are at the discretion of the Head of User Services.
3. Refunds/credits: Once billed, all charges become non-refundable. For exceptions, please see “Appeals.”

4. Reserve charges: Reserve desk items are subject to a special overdue rate schedule for items that circulate: 2-hour loans (building use only), \$1.00 per hour overdue; 1-day, 3-day, and 1-week loans, \$3.00 per day overdue.

Failure to Respond to Invoices

Patrons will have up to 3 months from the date of the first invoice to return or renew the billed item(s) before the second bill is processed. Once billed, the initial billing cost for each item becomes non-refundable. Further actions include:

1. Faculty and Operating Staff: when possible, a letter or email will be sent informing the faculty or staff member that NIU Library privileges have been suspended through CARLI I-Share until the matter is resolved. Accounts Receivable may take further action.
2. Students: NIU Library borrowing privileges will be suspended through CARLI I-Share. Transcripts may be withheld and/or registration may be encumbered until the matter is resolved.
3. Courtesy Card Holders: Library borrowing privileges can be suspended once charged items reach lost status.
4. CARLI I-Share affiliates' respective libraries will be contacted for appropriate action.

Appeals

NIU faculty may appeal their library charges to the Head of User Services. All other borrowers may appeal their billing charges by filing a written appeal with the Circulation Services unit of the University Libraries. These appeals are reviewed by the Circulation Appeals Committee. Patrons are informed of the Committee's decision via email or mail.

Suspensions

Patrons whose library privileges are suspended (see "Criteria for Extended Suspension of Library Circulation Privileges" above) may appeal their suspension to an ad hoc committee consisting of the Dean of University Libraries, the Associate Dean for Public Services, and the Chair of the Libraries Advisory Committee. Patrons have the right to review any relevant documentation, such as complaints from Library staff, in preparing their appeal.