

Interlibrary Loan: A User's Guide



BOSTON COLLEGE LAW LIBRARY

Please direct all inquiries to: lawill@bc.edu

Interlibrary Loan (“ILL”) is a service provided by the Law Library to obtain materials not in the Law Library collection. Books, photocopies and other materials are sent to us by other libraries, allowing our patrons to perform research without having to travel to other libraries. This service is available only to BC Law School students, faculty and staff. Other BC-affiliated library users should consult the interlibrary loan office at the O’Neill library; members of the public should consult their local public library for ILL.

Please note that ILL is a book and article retrieval service, not a research service. Library users must submit full citations for specific, identifiable items. If you are having trouble finding accurate citation information for the source you wish to borrow, please speak to a Legal Information Librarian before you submit your request. Remember, if you cannot determine the correct citation for a book or document, the ILL office probably will not be able to do so either.

How do I request materials through interlibrary loan?

Forms are available online through “Interlibrary Loan” in Quest, the BC Libraries’ online catalog and information system. There are two separate request forms, Copy Request and Loan Request. In addition, materials can be ordered directly via WorldCat, which is accessible through Quest.

I have been told that the Lexis/Westlaw format and other online sources are inappropriate for proper citation verification. Should I order the articles I am using through interlibrary loan?

Not necessarily. Online journals and newspaper articles may be used if they are scanned images of the original publication. Many law review articles are available in PDF format from Hein Online. PDF images of many other journals can be found by searching for the journal title in Quest and then using Find It to link to a PDF image. Please note that not all e-journals are available as PDF images; check the individual database. Additionally, the 19th edition of the Bluebook allows citation to an electronic source, rather than a print source, if that is what the author used. If you need a facsimile copy and the article you want is not available in PDF, feel free to place an ILL request.

Can I request a book through ILL that has been checked out to another patron?

Yes, however, if a book is on permanent reserve or course reserve, it cannot be ordered through ILL. If submitting an ILL request, please do not simultaneously place a recall on the BC copy.

What materials are available through Interlibrary Loan?

Many different types of items are available to be requested through ILL. However, because of the policies of many libraries, certain kinds of items are very difficult or sometimes impossible to get; see examples below:

- Multi-volume sets (full set)
- Very recent material
- Entire issues of law reviews and other journals (but you can request photocopies of individual articles)
- Reference books, rare books, or very old books
- Materials that are difficult to pack or expensive to ship
- Most audiovisual materials
- Books on permanent or course reserve at other libraries

What information do I need to provide to request an Interlibrary Loan?

It is important that you provide complete citations for each book or article you are requesting (i.e. author, title, year of publication; for articles, also include the name of the journal and the page number on which the article begins). Please complete the online ILL form. Incomplete or inaccurate information can delay the processing of your request. You are strongly encouraged to consult with a Librarian before submitting your request if you have any trouble determining the correct citation.

How long does it take for an interlibrary loan to arrive?

Most materials arrive within 3-7 working days, but depending on the circumstances, some requests can take longer. Although we try to obtain items as quickly as possible, delays can occur due to circumstances beyond our control. In order to use interlibrary loan to its fullest extent, PLAN AHEAD! There is no effective way to rush an interlibrary loan, other than by providing clear and complete information in your ILL request.

How will books and articles be delivered?

When items arrive we will notify you via e-mail and place them on the Hold shelf at the Information Desk. Most articles will be sent directly to you via e-mail. If the articles are in paper form, you will be notified via e-mail, and you may pick them up at the Information Desk. You will not receive a follow-up message, so please check your e-mail frequently and pick up your materials promptly.

How long will items be held for me after they arrive?

Generally, books will be returned to the lending library after two weeks on the hold shelf. Photocopies will be held until the end of the semester.

Is there any cost to request items through ILL?

No. There is no charge for students to request materials. However, students are responsible for any overdue, repair, or replacement charges accrued while the item is in their custody.

Can I check the status of my interlibrary loan request?

Yes. You can check the status of your request by signing on to your Interlibrary Loan account through Quest. If you have additional questions, please e-mail lawill@bc.edu for more information.

How long can I keep materials borrowed through Interlibrary Loan? Are there any restrictions?

Most ILL books are due four weeks from the date of arrival, although this can vary. The due date is printed on the Boston College label on the front of the book. Photocopies do not need to be returned and do not have a due date. Lending libraries sometimes place restrictions on item use, such as requiring that fragile materials be used only in the library or prohibiting renewals on popular items. We cannot waive these restrictions. All interlibrary loans are subject to immediate recall by the lending library at any time.

Can I renew my interlibrary loan?

Yes, usually. Most libraries are willing to renew interlibrary loan materials for one loan period. However, many libraries will not renew materials if the renewal is requested after the due date. If you wish to keep an item after the listed due date, please submit a renewal request at least one week before the due date. Renewal requests can be submitted through your Interlibrary Loan account or e-mailed to lawill@bc.edu.

If I need an item immediately and it is available at another local library, can I go to that library to get it?

If the other library is a member of the Boston Library Consortium, you may be able to check out books directly if you have a BLC card. Ask at the Information Desk about getting a BLC card.

Interlibrary loan is a library to library transaction, so other libraries not in the BLC will not generally give books directly to patrons of other libraries. In very special circumstances arrangements can be made to pick up interlibrary loans in person, but only at the discretion of the lending library, and these arrangements must be made during regular business hours.