

University of Texas Libraries – Phone Etiquette

The telephone is an important tool in the daily business within the UT Libraries. Learn how to use the phone properly! Make sure you know how to:

- Put a caller on hold
- Transfer a call
- Take a message--complete information needed

Below are some more helpful hints and proven techniques, to help make your phone use more effective.

Create a Good First Impression

- Answer promptly (within **three** rings). Answering a phone too fast can catch the caller off guard and waiting too long can make the caller angry.
- Answer with a friendly greeting:
Ask your supervisor for the preferred way for you to answer the phone in your department. It should be consistent for everyone in that department, whatever it is.
Example - *"Good Afternoon, Fine Arts Library, Sherrie speaking, how may I help you?"*
- **Smile** - it shows, even through the phone lines
- Speak clearly and slowly. Never talk with anything in your mouth. This includes gum.
- Lower your voice if you normally speak loud
- Keep the phone two-finger widths away from your mouth
- When someone calls your department in error, a wrong number, and they don't have the correct number, help them get the correct number. Look it up in the University Directory or the online directory. We are in the business of providing information--we should be able to do it for those who demonstrate an immediate need.

Putting Callers on Hold

When putting a caller on hold, always ask permission. If they ask why, provide them with the answer.

Examples: *"Would you mind holding while I get your file?"* or
"Can you hold briefly while I see if the librarian is available?"

When taking a caller off of hold, always **thank** the caller for holding.

Transferring a Caller

1. If the caller needs to speak to another person or department, please transfer the caller directly to the desired person's extension, not to the operator. This will save the caller having to explain his/her requests another time, and it will cut the number of times the caller needs to be transferred.
2. When transferring a caller, tell them who you are transferring them to, and announce the caller to the person you are transferring them to.

Taking Phone Messages

When taking a phone message for someone, be sure to include the following information:

- Caller's name and company name if applicable
- Time and date of call
- What the call is regarding
- If the caller wants a return phone call, and if so,
- Obtain a phone number that is best to return the call to

Last Impressions

- Before hanging up, be sure you have answered all the caller's questions
- Always end with a pleasantry:
Examples: *"Have a nice day"* or *"It was nice speaking with you"*
- Let the caller hang up first. This shows the caller that you weren't in a hurry to get off the phone with them