

Questions for Staff (LTS Procedure #6)

Scope: *Library Technical Services has a philosophy of service to the library user. LTS staff work with their colleagues in other library units to give the best access possible to resources in the Cornell University Library. To be effective, staff in LTS and elsewhere all need to understand how questions get answered and problems resolved within LTS.*

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Unit: Cataloging, Administration

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A. Asking Questions of, or Referring Problems to, LTS

A list of contact persons to whom specific questions or problems can be addressed in LTS is available at the [LTS Contacts page](#). Problems or questions can be sent to individuals on the contacts list in any way convenient to the requester: via telephone, campus mail, e-mail, or the mail forms generated from the page.

B. Responding to Questions or Problems

There are two important elements to be dealt with in this context. The first is the need of requesters to know that their problem is being worked on, and the other, the need to be informed that it has been dealt with, whether successfully or not. The first becomes particularly important when a problem cannot be solved within one business day. LTS staff are responsible for actively communicating with requesters about their requests, adhering as close to the following timetable as is practicable.

1. Within one business day, communicate an answer or a progress report to the requester. If possible, include an estimate of when work on the item in question will be completed, but don't make promises that you can't keep.
 2. Within three business days, let the requester know that work on the item in question has been completed. If it involves a particular item, tell the requester when the item will leave LTS. Do not speculate about when the requester will receive it, especially if it has to go through other departments first. Simply processing an item in response to a request without telling the requester that the work has been completed is not sufficient.
 3. If a problem cannot be dealt with within three business days, explain to the requester why and what you are doing about it. Such a problem should be referred to a LTS unit head, whose responsibility it then becomes to make sure that it is dealt with and that the requester is satisfied.
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C. Monitoring and Follow-up

1. Two events threaten others' perception of LTS as an effective problem-solving organization. One is when the communications stream is interrupted in some way, by a staff member either forgetting to communicate as prescribed or by being absent on the day when a communication should take place. The second is when the answers given are incorrect.
2. It is the responsibility of LTS unit heads to make sure that they have adequate means in their units to ensure that neither event happens. Their contingency plans should be written and known and understood by all, especially the first-line supervisors in units that have them. They may develop any tools they want to help them ensure that the problem resolution process in their units works satisfactorily, but a simple problem log is recommended.