

Use of Libraries

Policy Type: Local

Responsible Office: VCU Libraries

Current Revision Approved: 08/07/2026

Policy Statement and Purpose

This policy articulates the expected behaviors of individuals using VCU Libraries. The VCU Libraries has adopted this policy to protect the rights of both users and employees, to create an appropriate academic atmosphere, and to provide an environment that is safe, inclusive, and conducive to research and learning. Individuals are required to comply with this policy when using the VCU Libraries.

Contacts

VCU Libraries officially interprets this policy. Please direct policy questions to the Associate Dean for Research and Learning.

Definitions

Academic Pursuits

Activities that advance research, coursework, creative endeavors, or learning that require the specific information resources of a research library which are not available through public libraries.

Members of the General Public

Individuals who are not part of any of the following: VCU faculty, students, administrators, and staff; VCU affiliates; card-holding members of the Friends of VCU Libraries; and VCU Alumni card-holders.

Members of the VCU Libraries Community

VCU faculty, students, administrators, and staff; VCU affiliates; card-holding members of the Friends of VCU Libraries; and VCU Alumni card-holders.

Event

An organized activity or gathering, including but not limited to: meetings, organized discussions, performances, public speaking, or other forms of expressive activity.

Solicitation

Selling or promoting products, goods or services; using staff and faculty listings for the purpose of selling/promoting goods and/or services; seeking contributions or pledges, including distributing printed materials; and conducting membership drives. This definition is from the Campus Expression and Space Utilization policy; any changes to the definition therein will supersede the definition in this policy.

VCU Libraries

All services, collections, technology, and facilities managed by VCU Libraries including James Branch Cabell Library; the Health Sciences Library; and the VCU Medical Center Health and Wellness Library. Library facilities include interior spaces and also doorways, steps, entry areas, loading docks, porches, or any other exterior physical features of library buildings. Library facilities also include spaces in library buildings that are occupied by other units, tenants, or contractors, including the Starbucks in Cabell Library.

Policy Specifics

I. Introduction and Scope of Policy

The facilities, technology, materials, and services of the VCU Libraries are intended to support the instruction, research, patient care, creative endeavors, and study needs of the university community, and to preserve and protect collections for future users. VCU Libraries resources and services are primarily for members of the VCU Libraries community who are engaged in academic pursuits. Non-VCU students, faculty, and staff with an institutional identification from a high school, college, or university are permitted limited use of VCU Libraries facilities, computers, resources, and services to fulfill academic pursuits and in accordance with VCU Libraries policies, procedures, and rules.

Members of the general public who wish to access and use VCU Libraries facilities, resources, and services must be either a) attending events or using specific services that are designated as open to the public or b) engaged in academic pursuits. The VCU Libraries, in consultation with other VCU employees when necessary, will determine whether a member of the general public is engaged in academic pursuit. The Health and Wellness Library provides high-quality consumer health information and serves as a business center for VCU Medical Center patients and their families or caretakers. Any other use of VCU Libraries facilities by members of the general public is not permitted. Each library location reserves the right to request proof of VCU identification or government-issued identification, and to limit access to facilities exclusively to members of the VCU Libraries community during certain operational hours. Events held within VCU Libraries space must be either organized or specifically approved by VCU Libraries. All users must comply with rules for specific spaces, which may be posted physically or online.

II. Prohibited Behaviors and Actions

The following actions are prohibited when using VCU Libraries:

1. Any acts or conduct in violation of: this policy; policies, guidelines, procedures, and rules posted in VCU Libraries spaces or on VCU Libraries websites; University rules, procedures, and policies; or City of Richmond codes, Statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia, or federal laws.
2. Any behavior that disrupts or interferes with the normal use or operations of VCU Libraries, or disturbs staff or patrons, including, but not limited to: engaging in disorderly conduct; fighting or inciting violence; indecent exposure; sexual harassment or any other unlawful harassment; use of threatening language or gestures; excessively loud noise; or interfering with VCU Libraries employees' performance of duties.
3. Not following the reasonable direction of a VCU Libraries employee or other university official, including security officers and university police.
4. Disruptive noise in designated quiet/silent areas; loud noise in any other area of VCU Libraries buildings.
5. Talking on cell phones or other electronic devices in quiet/silent areas. Users must set cellphones and other mobile devices to a non-audible signal in quiet/silent spaces, and must be considerate toward other users when using them in all library spaces. Listening to or playing audio on devices without headphones is prohibited in all open study areas.
6. Professional, commercial, or mass media photography, videography, or audio recording without prior approval from VCU Libraries.
7. Approaching VCU Libraries users for media inquiries, interviews, or surveys, or other forms of data collection.
8. Solicitation or promotion of goods, causes, or events, including requests for monetary contributions, participation in membership drives, or petitions.
9. Distribution of written materials. Posting of written materials must be consistent with the VCU Libraries Display or Posting of Information Items policy.
10. Bringing animals inside VCU Libraries spaces other than service animals as defined by the university.
11. Using skateboards, roller skates, or bicycles on library premises, including outdoor seating areas and library buildings' exterior features.
12. Bringing bicycles, large scooters, or similarly sized vehicles, with the exception of mobility aids required by persons with a disability, into VCU Libraries buildings. Skateboards, foldable scooters, or similar vehicles must be small enough that their presence does not impede foot traffic or other library activities.
13. Leaving belongings unattended in any VCU Libraries spaces, including but not limited to study rooms, studios, or other reservable spaces
14. Refusing to leave a VCU Libraries space or building when it is closed or during an evacuation.
15. Organizing or holding events in VCU Libraries' spaces that are not in compliance with VCU Libraries event spaces or study room use guidelines.



16. Holding or organizing events (other than study groups of up to 15 people) in non-reservable VCU Libraries spaces without VCU Libraries approval.
17. Advertising events of any size in VCU Libraries spaces via social media or other mass communication tools without approval from VCU Libraries.
18. Using VCU Libraries spaces as living quarters. Evidence of such includes but is not limited to routinely sleeping in libraries, or bathing in library restrooms (excluding ritual bathing associated with religious customs).
19. Removing VCU Libraries materials or property from the premises without authorization.
20. Use by children under 16 years of age unaccompanied by a responsible adult.

III. Enforcement

The VCU Libraries reserves the right to revoke or restrict library privileges of any user for behavior in violation of this policy or other VCU Libraries policies; University rules, procedures, and policies; or City of Richmond codes, Statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia, or federal laws. Failure to comply with the VCU Libraries established rules and regulations may result in exclusion from VCU Libraries facilities, services, and/or access to collections temporarily or permanently. VCU Libraries may coordinate with other university entities when assessing policy violations, and decisions to revoke or restrict library privileges may be informed by actions or adjudications issued by those entities. However, VCU Libraries reserves the right to make independent decisions regarding library privileges.

Restrictions and revocations of library privileges that are determined by VCU Libraries are issued in writing by Associate Deans at VCU Libraries. Written appeals disputing misapplication or misinterpretation of VCU Libraries or University policies, guidelines, and rules may be made in writing to the Dean of Libraries within five (5) business days. Decisions about appeals will be issued in writing to the appellant within ten (10) business days. VCU Libraries reserves the right to make appeal decisions regarding revocation or restriction of library privileges unrelated to other adjudications issued by university entities.

Individuals in violation of Richmond City Codes, Statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia, or federal laws are subject to the relevant sanctions of those rules in addition to the sanctions under this or other university policy. Library employees, campus police, or university officials may request that any user provide identification. The VCU Libraries reserves the right to report prohibited behavior to university officials or law enforcement.

Related Documents and Information _____

1. All VCU policies, guidelines, rules, and procedures, including but not limited to:
 - a. [VCU Animals on University Property](#)
 - b. [VCU Campus Expression and Space Utilization Policy](#)
 - c. [VCU Code of Conduct](#)
 - d. [VCU Computer and Network Resources Use](#)
 - e. [VCU Student Code of Conduct](#)

2. All VCU Libraries policies, guidelines, rules, and procedures, including but not limited to:
 - a. [VCU Libraries Event and Exhibit Spaces](#)
 - b. [VCU Libraries Guidelines](#)
 - c. [VCU Libraries Request Permission to Film/Record](#)

Revision History _____

This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

February 2020	<i>Use of Libraries</i>
May 2018	<i>Use of Library Facilities</i>