Navigating the Stacks

During your shifts, you will:

- Locate specific areas/collections to re-shelve books and find individual items in a timely manner.
- Give directional assistance to patrons.
- Perform pick-ups.
- Shift, dust, etc.

All of these tasks require that you understand the layout of our buildings and collections.

What are “the stacks”? The book collections in the buildings are collectively referred to as “the stacks.” At the University Library, the stacks are located on the second and third floors, with a few collections also on the first floor and basement level. The main collection at the University Library is split between two floors, with A-L on the top floor, and M-Z & Oversized on the second floor.

Anatomy of a “Bookcase”

End labels are stickers mounted on end panels to display which call numbers are housed within the unit.

- Shelf – The smallest, individual unit that holds books.
- Section – A vertical series of shelves.
- Face – Vertical sections connected together horizontally to create one side of a “bookcase.”
- Range – This is what others may call a “bookcase.” In a library, a bookcase is called a range. A range is an entire furniture unit: two back-to-back faces with an end panel (the containing walls of the unit). Everything connected to the end panel is a range.

Bookends

- Bookends serve to keep the books upright and, therefore, in good condition.
- If you see that a shelf has leaning books on it, tighten the bookend.
- This is a simple task, but an important one!

Navigating Efficiently: Not Yet or Too Far?

Who wants to run around in circles all day? Not us! Here's how to avoid it:

- Identify which floor you need to go to, and use end labels (or books at the end of a range) to find the right range.
- Walking down the range, scan the call numbers at eye-level and simultaneously determine whether you are not yet at the correct call number or whether you have gone too far, past the call number. The shelf you are looking for is between your last “not yet” shelf and the next “too far” shelf.
- Once you have stumbled upon a section that is too far, go back to the last “not yet” section.
- Go down the shelves in that section, identifying “not yet” or “too far” until you find the shelf where the item belongs.
- Using LC call number rules, identify the exact location of the item.

Now you try it! Ask a supervisor to guide you.

Pick-ups

Items are consistently left around the building, which patrons are finished using and/or do not check out. Instead of asking patrons to re-shelve items, we would prefer to ensure they are correctly reshelved by doing it ourselves. This also helps us check the condition of items as they are used and handled.

During slower traffic times, student assistants are tasked with picking up these items from around the building. This task is called “pick-ups.”

- Student assistants should check book return bins, desks, areas around the stacks, and so on.
- Once they are compiled onto an empty truck, the student assistant should return the items to whomever is working at the circulation desk. The items will then be checked in and counted, and the number of items picked up will be recorded.

If a supervisor asks you to perform “deep” pickups, walk up and down the aisles between each range to search for fallen books and trash as well.