



BOSTON COLLEGE LAW LIBRARY

Interlibrary Loan – User’s Guide

What can I request through Interlibrary Loan?

Law students, faculty, and staff can use the Law Library’s Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service to obtain materials that are unavailable at Boston College Libraries. The ILL staff at O’Neill Library on main campus serve other BC-affiliated library users; members of the public should consult their public library for ILL services.

Before submitting an ILL request, please confirm that the item is currently unavailable for check out from the Law Library or any other BC library.

Please bear in mind that the following materials are very difficult, if not impossible, to acquire through ILL:

- Multi-volume sets
- Recent publications
- Entire journal issues
- Rare or very old books
- Reference texts
- Many audiovisual items

Additionally, please note that we do not generally allow ILL requests for anything available on Permanent Reserve or Course Reserve, though exceptions can occasionally be made, especially for non-casebook items.

How do I submit a request?

Log in to your [Interlibrary Loan account](#). On the left-side menu, choose either a *Loan Request* (for books, dissertations, microform, etc.) or a *Copy Request* (for journal articles, book chapters, etc.). Fill out the relevant form, providing as much citation information as you can, and then click “Submit Request.”

To save time, you can also place requests directly through [WorldCat](#) by searching for your desired item and using the “Request Item” feature beneath the “Check Availability” section. The request form will populate automatically, and all you have to do is click the “Submit Request” button.

How will I receive my materials? How long will it take?

PDFs of Copy Requests arrive by email. You will receive an email notification when Loan Request items are available for pick-up at the Information Desk. You will not automatically receive a follow-up email, so be sure to pick up your materials promptly—ILL items are returned after a few weeks on our Hold Shelf.

Most Loan Requests arrive within **3-7 business days**, while Copy Requests typically take **1-4 business days**. There are no effective means of rushing an ILL request, so the best way to ensure a speedy delivery is to provide a complete and accurate citation upon submission. This helps us process your request quickly and prevents the request coming back unfilled.

We cannot always predict when a request will arrive—every request is sent to a string of lending libraries, and each institution has up to four days to process it. Some items may take several weeks to acquire, especially if the book is extremely popular, widely non-circulating, or arriving from far away. Occasionally, staff shortages, postal problems, and simple human error can make even seemingly easy requests take longer than expected. You can check the status of your request by signing into your [Interlibrary Loan account](#) or emailing us at lawill@bc.edu for updates. We appreciate your patience!

Can I check an ILL book out to the Boston College Law Review account or a carrel?

No—just like intercampus loans from other BC libraries, ***ILL items must be checked out to a person.*** That person is responsible for the book's return, regardless of where it is or who is actually using it. You cannot check an ILL book out to another person after it arrives.

We suggest that editors request ILL books (and intercampus items) for Law Review source collection whenever possible. Law Review students are encouraged to send lists of required ILL materials to the relevant editor for submission.

Why was my request cancelled?

There are various reasons that a request may be cancelled, the most common reasons being:

- **Incomplete Citation.**
 - If your citation is incomplete or inaccurate, your request may be cancelled. Remember to include page numbers with a Copy Request whenever possible.
 - If you need help finding information about a source, a Reference Librarian will be more than happy to help you! Email lawresearchhelp@bc.edu, use the "Chat with a Librarian" link on the Law Library website, or stop by the Information Desk for assistance.
- **Available at Boston College.**
 - If the text is available at the Law Library in your preferred format, your request will be cancelled with instructions on where to find your material.
 - If a book is available at another BC library, your request will be cancelled and resubmitted as an inter-campus request. Save time and place inter-campus requests through the library catalog yourself by clicking "Request Book" in the item page and selecting "Law" as your pick-up location.
- **Exhausted All Possible Sources.**
 - Sometimes, requests return unfilled for one or more reasons. At this point, we recommend reaching out to a Reference Librarian or your editor for advice. Sometimes it makes sense to resubmit your request after a period of time, but not always.

How long can I keep an ILL book?

Loan periods typically span **four to eight weeks**, but occasionally as long as sixteen weeks. We are obligated to follow any conditions (i.e. due dates, recalls, Library-Use Only restrictions, etc.) set by the lending library. You will be notified of any changes to your item's due date by email.

Can I renew my ILL book?

Most lending libraries will allow us to renew books at least once, unless the label specifies "No Renewals." The possibility and length of renewal is at their discretion, not ours. Please request renewals through your Interlibrary Loan account or email lawill@bc.edu before your item's due date.

If your request is successful, you will receive an email notification with the new due date. Please allow a few days for the lending library to respond.

If a renewal request is denied, you must return the item by its due date. Failure to do so can result in fines, replacement fees, and/or temporary suspension of borrowing privileges. If you still need the book, you can submit another ILL request, and we will attempt to get a replacement copy for you.