

Reference Trends at Hunter College

Quality vs. Quantity

Welcome Desk/Reference Desk

- Reference transactions down 38% for 2013-14.

	Fall 2013-Spring 2014	Fall 2012-Spring 2013	Change %
In depth Reference	646	1,159	-44%
Ready Reference	4,714	4,878	-3%
Directional	727	2,782	-74%
Technical	1,196	2,035	-41%
Supplies	390	1,427	-73%
Total	7,673	12,281	-38%

Directions & Office Supplies

- The downturn in reference stats was most notable in terms of directional and supply questions which were now handled by a “Welcome Desk” staffed by student workers.

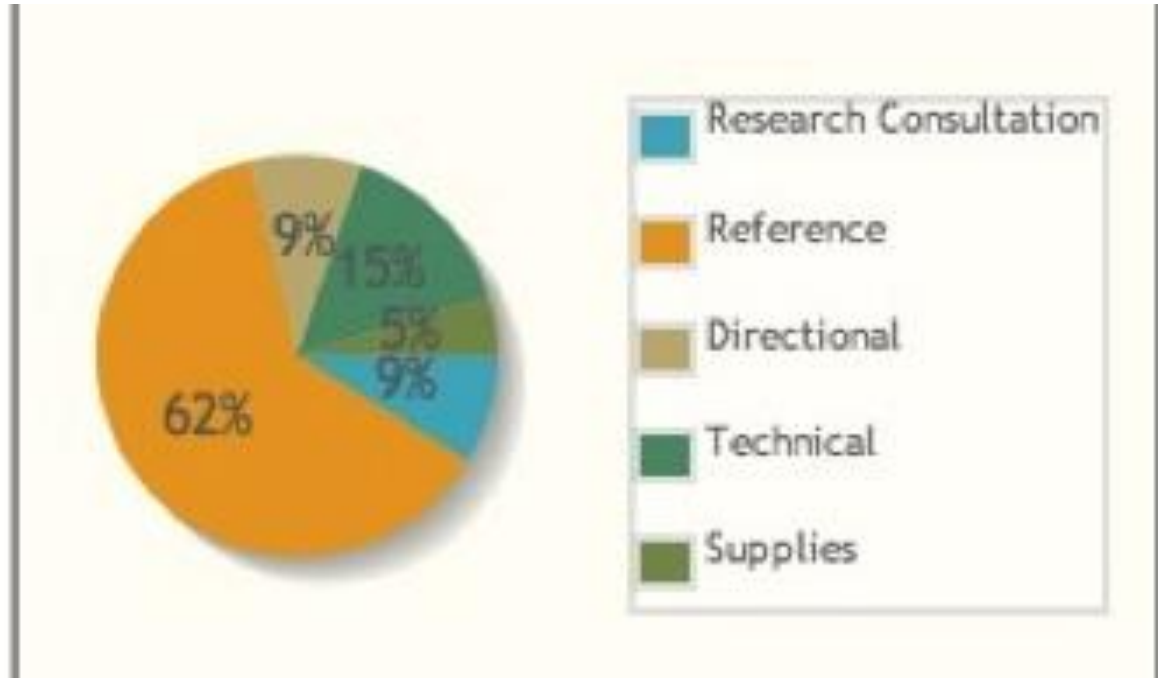
Number Inflation

- Our reference stats in the past were probably inflated because the reference desk was where students asked for staplers, tape, directions to the restrooms, etc.

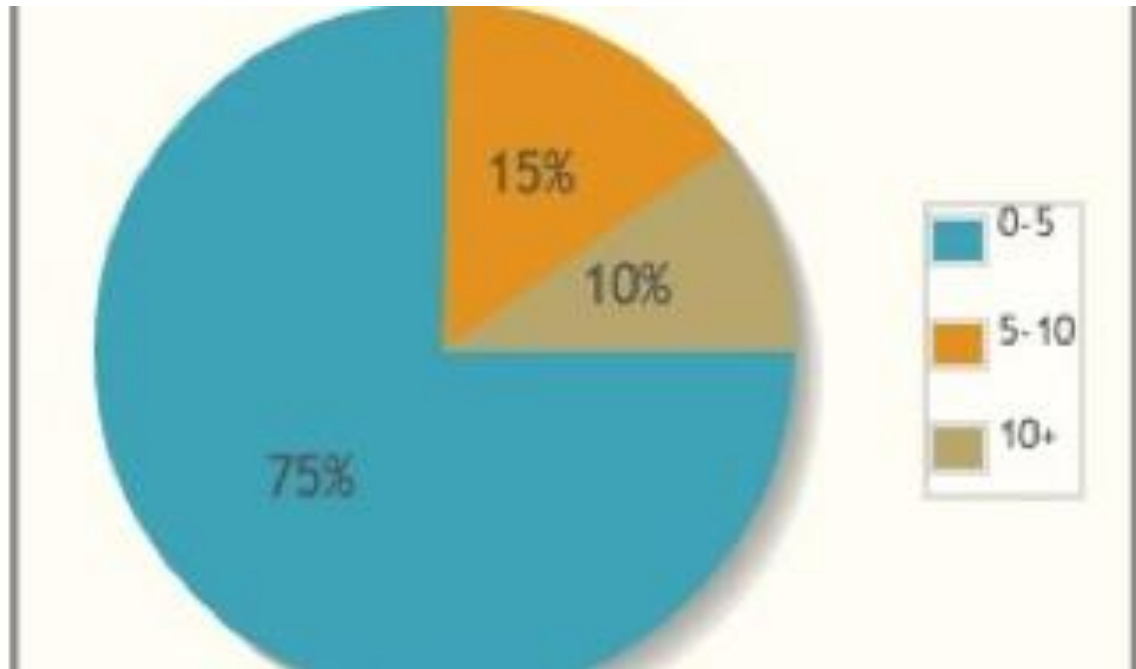
Catalog Lookups vs. Research

- Removing directional questions and office supply questions reduced our numbers to “pure reference work,” but that largely meant quick call number lookups.

Question Types



Duration of Questions



Virtual Reference

- While our interactions at the reference desk are in decline, our students have increased their use of our chat reference option.

Chats Requested

2013-2014	3,276	-6%
2012-2013	3,490	+19%
2011-2012	2,931	+93%
2010-2011	1,521	

Research Consultations

- Research consultations rose dramatically this past academic year. Students are encouraged to sign up for consultations through the library blog and are reminded to do so in classes.
- Students can sign up for a consultation at <http://library.hunter.cuny.edu/forms/contact-us> which goes to the head of reference who passes it on to the appropriate librarian.

Consultation Requests

2013-2014	171	+195%
2012-2013	58	-47%
2011-2012	109	+445%
2010-2011	20	

In Sum

- Students are still using librarians for reference help, but they are doing so when it is convenient for them, whether it be on chat or a scheduled consultation that works with their own calendar.
- When they do go to a desk they want a quick interaction, whether it be directions, more staples, or a quick call number check.