Confidentiality of Circulation Records Frequently Asked Questions

Are records of the library materials I check out confidential?

Yes, under Washington State law and EWU policy, your library records are confidential. EWU Libraries will not give this information to anyone but you, except with your written consent, or in compliance with a subpoena or search warrant served by a court of competent jurisdiction.

What qualifies as my “written consent”?

In this case, “your written consent” means that you have completed and signed the library’s release form.

Can I have someone else check out materials for me?

No, only you may check out materials on your library account. The only exception: if you are an EWU faculty member and have a proxy card for a graduate assistant, the graduate assistant may check out materials for you on the proxy card.

What if I want to see what my son, a student at EWU, has checked out?

Sorry, that information is confidential. Only your son may have that information.

My child is a minor and has a community user library card from EWU Libraries that I have signed for. Can I see what library materials my child has checked out? My child is not a student at EWU.

Sorry, that information is confidential. Only your child may have that information.

I want to pay for a book that my spouse lost. Can you tell me what the title is?

No, your spouse’s library record is confidential. The library can tell you what the charges for the material are, and you can pay them—but the library cannot tell you the title.

Can I call the library on the phone and be told what books I currently have checked out?

The library can tell you how many items you have checked out and when they are due. Since the library cannot be sure that the person on the other end of the line is really you, however, the library cannot tell you the titles of the materials over the phone. You can, of course check your library record yourself, from any computer with access to the Internet.

My roommate asked me to stop by the library and pay his library fines. Is that allowable?

Yes, someone else may pay your library fines. But the library cannot tell your roommate the titles of the books that incurred the fines.
Can my instructor see what materials I have checked out?

No, that information is confidential. EWU Libraries do not give confidential information to instructors, even EWU instructors. For example, if an instructor asks, we will tell the instructor how many people checked out a reserve material; but we will not give the instructor the names of the people who checked the material out.

Can a friend return my library materials for me and get a receipt showing they have been checked in?

Your friend can put the materials in the return bin. Since library system receipts show what is on your account, only you can get a receipt for your account, unless you have signed the library’s release form.