

AskAway Service Continuity Plan

Prepared by the AskAway Advisory Committee

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1. Purpose

As a service for the post-secondary students, faculty and staff of BC's post-secondary institutions, it is imperative that AskAway have a plan in place to ensure continuity of service in the event of disruptions such as natural disasters, severe weather events, fires, job action at participating institutions, pandemics, etc.. The purpose of this response plan is to outline how the AskAway service will continue to deliver in the event that:

- a significant number of AskAway shifts are unfilled due to one or more participating libraries being unable to staff their assigned AskAway shifts.
- there is an increase in the number of patrons using AskAway due to a disruption in library services at their home institution.

Either of these situations would result in a short-term increase to the average **service ratio** (the calls per hour per service provider).

Responses are provided for two types of service disruptions:

- A. **Vis Major:** An unplanned event that is caused solely by the effect of nature, natural causes or humans (such as a natural disaster, weather event, power outage, fires or pandemic) and is beyond human power to cause, prevent or control.
- B. **Job Action** at one or more participating AskAway institutions.

2. Responsibility

The decision to invoke the AskAway Service Continuity Plan will be made jointly by the following individuals:

- the Chair of the AskAway Advisory Committee (or a designated alternate Committee member);
- the Chair of the BC ELN Steering Committee (or a designated alternate Steering Committee member);
- the AskAway Administrative Centre.

3. Preparedness

A. Vis Major Service Disruptions

In order to prepare for service disruptions due to disasters, weather events, pandemics, etc., the following should be in place:

1. AskAway Contingency Team: A group of AskAway staff willing and able to provide additional hours in the event of a disaster.
2. AskAway Swap Board: A web-based tool allowing open shifts to be offered and exchanged by AskAway staff.

B. Job Action Service Disruptions

In the event of job action at one or more participating AskAway institutions, the individuals listed in Section 2, page 3, will initiate a job action service disruptions response, as outlined in Section 4.B, page 7.

4. Response to short-term increase in average service ratio

A short-term increase in the average service ratio (calls per hour per service provider) can happen for two main reasons:

- A shortage of AskAway staff due to one or more participating libraries being unable to staff their assigned AskAway shifts because of service disruptions.
- Increasing numbers of patrons using AskAway due to a disruption in library services at their home institution.

The average service ratio will vary depending on the particular time of year, week of the term and day of the week. For instance, the average service ratio for Mondays in November 2010 was 4:1. For Saturdays in November 2010 it was 5:1.

Determining the average service ratio

In the event of service disruptions at participating AskAway institutions, the AskAway Administrative Centre will determine the average service ratios based on the previous 30 days of service. These ratios will be used as a baseline to determine whether the service is seeing a short-term increase in average service ratios due to service disruptions.

Initiating a service continuity response

Should the service disruption result in an increase of more than 1.5:1 to the average service ratios, sustained over more than 3 days, then the AskAway Administrative Centre will recommend to the AskAway Advisory Committee Chair that a service continuity response be initiated.

The response to an increase in calls per service provider will depend on the type of service disruption. Following are the responses to the two main types of service disruptions: Vis Major service disruptions; and job action service disruptions.

A. Vis Major Service Disruptions Response

Staff Shortages

Libraries are primarily responsible for ensuring their scheduled shifts are covered internally.

If a library is not able to cover its scheduled shifts internally, it should post its shifts to the [serviceproviders](#) listserv and the AskAway Swap Board for other libraries to pick up if they are able.

The AskAway Contingency Team, made up of volunteers from libraries and BC ELN auxiliary staff, will be tasked with covering any shifts that are not picked up by libraries within 18 hours of the scheduled start of the shift.

Should the staff shortages result in an increase of more than 1.5:1 to the average service ratios, sustained over more than 3 days, then the AskAway Administrative Centre will make a recommendation to the AskAway Advisory Committee Chair that AskAway service hours be reduced.

Recommended service hour reductions will be made in the order outlined in section 5, page 8 to ensure service ratios are maintained while AskAway is open.

Increasing Traffic

In the event of a service disruption to an AskAway participating library, there is a possibility that AskAway traffic will increase as a result of increasing numbers of patrons accessing AskAway as an alternative to their home library services.

Should the increasing traffic result in an increase to the average service ratios of more than 1.5:1 sustained over more than 3 days, then the AskAway Administrative Centre will make a recommendation to the AskAway Advisory Committee Chair that AskAway staffing levels be increased.

Once the decision to increase staffing levels is made, the AskAway Administrative Centre will identify times where extra coverage is needed, and will determine how many extra staff are needed for each time period.

The extra shifts will be posted to the [serviceproviders](#) listserv and the AskAway Swap Board for participating libraries to fill if possible.

The AskAway Administrative Centre will provide additional AskAway training in-person or virtually if necessary to increase library staff capacity.

The AskAway Contingency Team, made up of volunteers from libraries and BC ELN auxiliary staff, will be tasked with covering any shifts that are not picked up by libraries within 18 hours of the shift.

If, for a period of one week, extra shifts are not covered more than 10% of the time, or if AskAway auxiliary staff are working over 10% more hours per

week than during the previous 30 days of service, the AskAway Administrative Centre will make a recommendation to the AskAway Advisory Committee Chair to reduce service hours in order to increase staffing levels when the service is open.

Recommended service hour reductions will be made in the order outlined in section 5, page 8 to ensure service ratios are maintained while AskAway is open.

B. Job Action Service Disruptions Response

Individual libraries are responsible for ensuring that their scheduled AskAway shifts are covered.

If a library is not able to cover its shifts internally, the director (or designate) of the affected institution should inform the AskAway Chair (or designate) and the Administrative Centre.

Should the service disruption result in an increase of more than 1.5:1 to the average service ratios, sustained over more than 3 days, then the AskAway Administrative Centre will make a recommendation to the AskAway Advisory Committee Chair that AskAway service hours be reduced.

Recommended service hour reductions will be made in the order outlined in section 5, page 8 to ensure service ratios are maintained while AskAway is open.

5. Staged Service Hour Reductions

Should any service disruption result in an increase of more than 1.5:1 to the average service ratios, sustained over more than 3 days, then the AskAway Administrative Centre will make a recommendation to the AskAway Advisory Committee Chair that AskAway service hours be reduced.

If necessary, service hour reductions will be implemented in the stages outlined below. These stages have been developed in order to balance the needs of AskAway patrons with the complexity of the rescheduling involved.

Each reduction will be cumulative, i.e. each stage will include the reductions implemented in the previous stages.

As service disruptions are remediated, and as service ratios can be returned to normal levels, service hours will be increased by the same stages in reverse.

Recommended Stages of Service Hour Reductions

1. Cancel Thursday evening (6-9 PM) service.
2. Cancel Friday and Saturday service.
3. Reduce Sunday - Thursday service hours to 10 AM - 6 PM.
4. Reduce Sunday - Thursday service hours to 12 PM - 5 PM.
5. Subsequent reductions to service hours will be determined by the AskAway Executive Committee based on the particular circumstances and needs at the time.
6. Close AskAway.

The following charts illustrate the impact of each stage on the schedule.

AskAway Service Hour Reductions (Closures marked in grey):

Stage 1 Reduction	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00 AM-9:59 AM							
10:00 AM-10:59 AM							
11:00 AM-11:59 AM							
12:00 PM-12:59 AM							
1:00 PM-1:59 PM							
2:00 PM-2:59 PM							
3:00 PM-3:59 PM							
4:00 PM-4:59 PM							
5:00 PM-5:59 PM							
6:00 PM-6:59 PM							
7:00 PM-7:59 PM							
8:00 PM-8:59 PM							

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AskAway Service Hour Reductions cont. (Closures marked in grey):

Stage 2 Reduction	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00 AM-9:59 AM							
10:00 AM-10:59 AM							
11:00 AM-11:59 AM							
12:00 PM-12:59 AM							
1:00 PM-1:59 PM							
2:00 PM-2:59 PM							
3:00 PM-3:59 PM							
4:00 PM-4:59 PM							
5:00 PM-5:59 PM							
6:00 PM-6:59 PM							
7:00 PM-7:59 PM							
8:00 PM-8:59 PM							

Stage 3 Reduction	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00 AM-9:59 AM							
10:00 AM-10:59 AM							
11:00 AM-11:59 AM							
12:00 PM-12:59 AM							
1:00 PM-1:59 PM							
2:00 PM-2:59 PM							
3:00 PM-3:59 PM							
4:00 PM-4:59 PM							
5:00 PM-5:59 PM							
6:00 PM-6:59 PM							
7:00 PM-7:59 PM							
8:00 PM-8:59 PM							

Stage 4 Reduction	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00 AM-9:59 AM							
10:00 AM-10:59 AM							
11:00 AM-11:59 AM							
12:00 PM-12:59 AM							
1:00 PM-1:59 PM							
2:00 PM-2:59 PM							
3:00 PM-3:59 PM							
4:00 PM-4:59 PM							
5:00 PM-5:59 PM							
6:00 PM-6:59 PM							
7:00 PM-7:59 PM							
8:00 PM-8:59 PM							

Stage 5 reduction: Subsequent reductions to service hours will be determined by the AskAway Executive Committee based on the particular circumstances and needs at the time.

6. Communications

The AskAway Administrative Centre and the Advisory Committee Chair will be responsible for ensuring that all AskAway participating libraries and service providers receive communication should it be necessary to implement any part of the AskAway Service Continuity Plan.

Communication will be via the [localcoordinators](#) and [serviceproviders](#) listservs.

7. Review

The AskAway Service Continuity plan will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee every 2 years or as needed.