

AskAway Actions & Achievements | 2024

EXPANDED ACCESS TO RESEARCH HELP

"What a great service! I needed help on a Sunday night, and I'm so impressed this was available."

Camosun College faculty / staff



AskAway is open **7 days a week**, including most evenings until 9pm Pacific.

Each week, students, instructors, and researchers have access to **235 staff hours** of live, online help. In 2024, they initiated **30,671 chat sessions**.

CONVENIENT, LOW-BARRIER, ONLINE

There is no authentication, personal information, or appointment required to access AskAway.

"I like that the service is anonymous for both the librarian and the user. It helps avoid anxiety barriers that might come up when seeking help. Thank you!"

Okanagan College student



94% of users said they are likely to visit the service again.

More than half of AskAway users choose the service because they are **at home or off-campus**.

"Great experience for my first interaction online with the library!"

BCIT student

SKILLED & CONNECTED COMMUNITY

AskAway relies on trust and cooperation. In 2024, **75% of students** (23,013 chats) who used AskAway were helped by a service provider from another library when their home librarians were not available.



In July 2024, **45 service providers** attended a lunch and learn from the UBC Digital Tattoo Team to learn about supporting students using GenAI in their research.

LOCAL & PROVINCIAL COST-SAVINGS

In 2024, a mid-sized institution **saved \$80,000** by participating in AskAway instead of offering a comparable service alone.



Overall, the post-secondary sector avoided **\$2.2 million**.

2024 Accomplishments

Established the **Commitment Models Review Working Group** to address service sustainability. The representative working group used a variety of methods – including surveys, consultation with participating libraries, and analysis of service data – to gather information about how AskAway members experience the commitment models and to learn about possible alternatives from similar consortial services. They will present recommendations to the AskAway Advisory Committee in early 2025.

Administered Year One of Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSFS) **removing barriers funding** to hire service providers to staff AskAway and provide administrative support to members. The funding ensured that AskAway maintained service levels in response to ongoing high demand from students.

Collaborated and consulted with local coordinators to **implement service enhancements** and improve AskAway for students and service providers. These include new guidelines for service providers to respond to patron-reported medical emergencies, promoting AskAway implementation in the new EBSCO User Interface, and improved usage statistics reporting.

On the horizon
in 2025...

Addressing service

sustainability: the AskAway Advisory Committee will build on the work of the Commitment Models Review Working Group and develop an action plan to address AskAway's long-term financial, staffing, and support needs.

Implementing PSFS removing barriers funding: funding will be used to increase service staffing, support sustainability work, and investigate ways to reduce barriers to participation for BC ELN partner libraries and Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions.

Exploring emerging technology: a subcommittee of the Advisory Committee will investigate and make recommendations for emerging technologies to enhance the service.

2024-25 Financials (Projected)

The AskAway budget is approved by the Advisory Committee.

