

Atla Reciprocal Borrowing Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is your timeline for gathering responses? Is there a deadline?

A: We are requesting that all current participants update their information, including their participation tier, by January 31st, 2023, using the Library Profile form on the Atla Reciprocal Borrowing webpage. A direct link to the form is here: [Library Profile Form](#)

Q: Does lending to a global collaborator mean the library would be required to send items overseas? Or just that if a patron is physically present at the reciprocating library they can borrow?

A: Lending and borrowing in this program for any participant is limited to those physically present at a library. Mailing items is not an option in the program.

Q: Can you please remind me of the requirements for one to become a global collaborator?

A: Global Collaborators must fulfill the following conditions:

- Be an Atla Institutional or Affiliate Candidate member
- Be outside North America
- Have a lending collection
- Agree to lend to members in the Participant Plus and Global Collaborators tiers

Q: Are global collaborators grouped according to region? Does that mean that there needs to be a significant number of libraries to be grouped into this category?

A: No, we are not currently grouping Global Collaborators by region. Even if an institution is the only member in their country, they can join as a Global Collaborator. However, if there are multiple Global Collaborator members in a region, they can work together through this program.

Q: Is there some way for participating libraries to indicate if their doors are open to borrowers from other institutions? I know Covid-19 has changed protocols around how our campuses are accessed.

A: With the changing nature of campus access throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we chose not to record that information for each institution, since that would require institutions to update their information through our forms every time their access changed. Instead, [the Reciprocal Borrowing webpage](#) has a statement advising individuals to contact libraries before visiting to get this information.

Q: If I choose to participate as a Participant Plus library, could my patron who is taking classes online and lives internationally, go in-person to a Global Collaborator library?

A: Yes. If your library chooses to be at the Participant Plus tier *and* agrees to lend to Global Collaborator affiliated patrons, your patron outside North America could go in-person to a Global Collaborator library.

Q: Is there a list of current Participants?

A: A list of current participants as well as an interactive map can be found on the [Atla Reciprocal Borrowing webpage](#). This is updated any time a new member is accepted, when a current member changes their information, or when a member decides to leave the program.

Q: I'm concerned about the borrower only category. I know of seminaries who have simply gotten rid of their library and signed agreements with partner institutions for borrowing privileges. I'm worried about institutions seeing this program as a viable alternative to maintaining their own libraries.

A: Because this would not be a direct agreement with a partner institution, this program cannot be substituted for a library for accreditation purposes. However, this is something Atla considered while creating this expansion and all applicants will be appropriately screened to ensure that they still have a library of some kind and are eligible to take part.

Q: How does this affect the ILL OCLC ATUG group?

A: Since this program is only for borrowing when a patron is physically present, it will have no effect on any current ILL groups or programs.

Q: When we send someone to another library, should they connect with a reference librarian first? Or can students look up a library and go without connecting with their home library first?

A: With the way the program is currently designed, a patron is able to find a participating library on the Atla Reciprocal Borrowing webpage and can go to a library without contacting their home library first. It is not required that a patron receive any verification from their home library. However, the lending library may choose to contact the patron's home library to verify the patron is current and in good standing before offering borrowing privileges – lending libraries may enforce their own level of verification, but should not require a form for verification, as this falls outside the parameters of the borrowing agreement guidelines.

Q: If an item(s) is not returned, how is this handled with the host institution?

A: Atla funds and administers a \$5,000 annual lost item insurance fund for program participants. Libraries who have lent an item that has not been returned may request replacement funds at any time. Requests will be processed twice a year (January and June). Both Lending and Home libraries will be required to document their best faith efforts to retrieve the borrower's item(s).

Q: What is the advantage of being a Participant Plus member?

A: The advantage to being a Participant Plus member depends on the other member groups you choose. If you choose to work with Global Collaborators, the benefit is that your patrons that live outside North America can potentially go to a Global Collaborator participating library and check out books. As for choosing Borrower Only institutions, there is no direct measurable advantage. However, by doing so, one is exemplifying Atla's ethics of hospitality and inclusivity, as well as being of benefit to a wider population of students working in theology and religion in your local area.

Q: Did I understand correctly: The primary difference between Participant and Participant Plus is that Participant Plus is willing to lend to Global Collaborators and Borrower Only libraries?

A: Yes, that is correct. This is the only difference between the Participant and Participant Plus tiers.

Q: If we change tier, are we still able to limit participation to a specific population? For example, we don't currently participate for undergrads.

A: Yes, you can make this distinction at any tier. Under the Lending Policies section of the Agreement and Profile Form, a participating institution can choose any or all of the populations of undergraduate students, graduate students, or faculty.

Q: Is there any limitation that this is for religion/theology students only?

A: There is not currently a question on our forms for this explicit restriction. However, in the Lending Policies section of the Agreement and Profile Form, there is a space for notes on lending related to restrictions and special cases. Here you can designate that your institution only lends to theology and/or religion students. However, verification of a patron's program/major would need to be facilitated between the home and lending library.

Q: I know this is focused on reciprocal borrowing, but is there a way Atla is facilitating scanning and sending chapters and articles? I could see this perhaps being more helpful for global collaborators.

A: Due to the complexities of copyright law, Atla is not currently considering administering a document delivery program.