On July 1, Sterling Memorial Library operations staff moved library materials from the contactless pickup racks in the Sterling Memorial Library nave to the hold shelf inside the Sterling stacks. An enduring visual of the library’s pandemic response, the racks of bagged and labeled books debuted in Thain Café at Bass Library in June 2020 and moved to Sterling in August 2020 when the libraries reopened to the campus community.

Over the course of the pandemic library staff filled 44,784 requests for contactless pickup of library materials. The service was also offered at Cushing/Whitney Medical Library and, for a shorter period of time, at the Divinity Library.

With the relaxation of some COVID restrictions, the contactless pickup has ended. Library users can once again request books for pickup at the Sterling hold shelf (inside and to the left of the entrance to the stacks.) Books on the hold shelf are not pre-checked-out. Patrons must check out their books at a service desk, self-checkout kiosk, or using the Yale Library Self-Checkout app (available on iTunes or Google Play.)

Other library services introduced in response to the pandemic are still being evaluated and, in some cases, may become permanent. The option for library users to request their books by mail to addresses in the U.S. is being continued for another year, to see if its popularity continues in more “normal” times. During the 2020-21 academic year, library staff filled 18,883 mail-to-address requests. A related service for book delivery to campus residences ended June 30 because it was used primarily during student quarantine periods.

At this time, access to Yale libraries is still restricted to current faculty, staff, and students authorized to be on
Goodbye, contactless pickup! Library adjusts services as pandemic eases
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campus during the summer term. Mail-to-address service is available to current faculty, staff, and students only.

Photo credit: Katy Webb

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