



The following memo was first drafted in 2008. In 2016, the document was forwarded to the Library, CTL, Open Learning, Provost's Office, and the Bookstore and updates were made. The memo was last reviewed by the Senate Student Caucus, the Academic Policy Committee and Senate in Fall 2016 and a Statement of Principle on Education Resources for Courses was adopted by Senate on November 11, 2016.

MEMO: Recommendations to Instructors for Reducing Costs to Students for Course Materials (e.g., textbooks)

The following are recommendations for ways in which textbooks and other course materials might be made more readily available to students at the lowest possible prices or at no cost.

Students understand that there are course materials associated with each course and that there are generally costs involved in obtaining the required or recommended materials. Costs for some course materials, particularly textbooks, can be prohibitive. There are several ways in which instructors can help students in this respect, all the while ensuring that continued high standards in the content of the course material are met. Please consider the following (some suggestions will be more applicable in some courses and disciplines than in others):

1. **Try to identify textbooks that are equivalent in content** and delivery that are free of cost and/or that are more reasonably priced than those “pushed” by the major publisher. **Instructors should first consider** the feasibility of **using open educational resources** for their required or recommended course materials. There is a growing number of good quality open access course materials. These materials come at no cost. Students can choose to view the materials online at no cost, print certain portions, or print the entire book. The cost associated with printing would be borne by the student but likely would be significantly less than the cost of a traditional hard copy textbook. The Leddy Library is creating a repository of open educational resources. In addition to the Leddy Library, instructors are also encouraged to visit OpenStax College (www.openstax.org), a Rice University-based initiative, which “uses philanthropic gifts to produce high-quality, peer-reviewed textbooks that are free online and low-cost in print” (<http://www.rice.edu/unconventional/textbooks.shtml>) and BCcampus OpenEd (<https://open.bccampus.ca>). “Since 2012, British Columbia has pursued a strategy to create open digital textbooks to help meet the soaring prices of print materials required for many classes” (<http://academica.ca/top-ten/bc-universities-look-open-source-address-“absurd”-textbook-prices>).
2. Instructors can also **create** their own **course materials** by borrowing and adapting **from existing open education resources**. Again, because the material is compiled from open educational resources, there is no cost to the student.
3. Instructors are encouraged to **create, maintain and update** their own course materials and to publish them as **open educational resources**, through a robust peer-reviewed process. When creating their own open textbooks, instructors should also create a complete suite of support materials associated with the e-textbooks such as solution manuals, slides, etc.
4. While the Leddy Library does not purchase textbooks, instructors with an **extra copy of the textbook** should consider placing it **on course reserve** for student use throughout the semester. Where the course material is available at the Leddy Library, instructors are encouraged to place copies on course reserve and/or provide the call number of the book on the course syllabus.
5. The option of **renting a textbook** is also available through many publishers. Instructors should consider whether there is both a buy and a rent option for their selected textbooks. While the student would not retain the textbook at the end of the semester, the rent option may be significantly lower in cost.

6. Instructors seeking to offer digital learning opportunities to students can require students to **purchase digital learning resources** for instructional purposes, including assessment of learning, within specific limits (go to <http://www1.uwindsor.ca/provost/policies-and-procedures> for the Policy on the Use of Digital Learning Resources for Instructional and Assessment Purposes). When determining whether to require the purchase of digital resources, instructors should weigh the cost to students against the advantages of the digital resources in the students' learning. In all cases, instructors are encouraged to identify low-cost or no-cost alternatives, wherever possible.
7. **Different offerings of a course in different terms should ideally use the same textbook** for two reasons: a) a student who fails a course and retakes it the following term should not have to buy yet another textbook and b) it will increase availability of used textbooks. Instructors are encouraged to construct course material so that current and previous textbooks (one or two editions) are sufficient, perhaps with some additional material being made available for those students who do not have the most recent edition, and to identify core books which could be used consistently, enabling students to make purchases in a wide variety of ways that will reduce their costs while still allowing them to have the right materials. If a course changes its textbook each year or if sections of a course use a different textbook because instructors choose to go different ways (even though the differences between books are minimal at the introductory level), it greatly reduces the flexibility that students have to recycle books among each other or purchase them on the used book market. Instructors are also encouraged to consult with other instructors to see if there is a single book that can be used over two courses, or that can at least continue to be used as a resource for other courses.
8. An important way to ensure cost-effective hard copy textbook purchasing is **early ordering by instructors**. It may be possible to negotiate textbook prices if book orders are placed on or before the Bookstore's deadline. The Bookstore can also contact used-book distributors to try to get the assigned textbooks at a discounted price. Large quantities of used books can only be acquired when there is sufficient lead time. Orders which are not placed on time will likely have to be filled through a publisher at higher cost which must be passed along to students. Any steps that can be taken with Faculties and Departments to ensure that instructors meet timelines of the Bookstore will result in cost savings to students and better availability of course materials at the start of courses.
9. Whenever possible it would be helpful if Heads would **assign course materials for those courses for which late instructional appointments are anticipated**. In some areas, this is already done and ensures that students will have course materials available to them early in the semester and at a cost that is reasonable. Where ordering of course materials is left as the responsibility of an instructor appointed late (as is the unavoidable case in many instances), the inevitable result is more expensive and often much-delayed course materials for students.
10. **Avoid purchasing textbook "bundles"**. Bundling has become common practice among publishers, allowing them to charge more by providing additional materials that may not be needed or wanted. Additional books, access codes and/or electronic devices do not add value to bundles unless they are fully incorporated into the course.
11. **Review costs when dealing with publishers**. Instructors who are choosing the hard copy textbooks as teaching resources might not realize that the price of the textbooks can be negotiated with the supplier. This negotiation has to happen between the instructor and the supplier, since only the instructor can suggest that s/he will change to a different textbook/supplier. This negotiation can take a few forms. For example, a) agree to use a particular edition of a book, as required reading, only if the publisher guarantees that the edition will remain available for say, five years; b) agree to use a textbook only if the price is reduced by 20% to students at Windsor.
12. **Make first-year students aware of the buyback policy of the University Bookstore**. The University Bookstore buys back used textbooks all year long. The University Bookstore pays up to 50% of the list price for textbooks which have been adopted for upcoming terms. The sooner the Bookstore receives a textbook order, the sooner it can start buying the book back from the students. Instructors should also warn students that they

need to be aware of any proposed change in the textbook edition used in a course. (In some cases there are negligible changes between editions.)

13. Instructors may contact the Bookstore to create their own **CUSTOM TEXTBOOK** which would include a compilation of various required chapters from one or more textbooks which the Publisher can produce at a reduction of the cost of the full textbook. This is more efficient than requiring students to purchase the full textbook at full price when only a portion of the course material is actually required content, for success.
14. The Bookstore **price matches new textbooks** with Amazon.ca and Indigo.ca to reduce costs for students. The Bookstore also offers guaranteed buyback, which can be thought of as **a reverse rental of a textbook**. The Bookstore guarantees buyback of a book at a certain price when purchased. When the book is brought back at the end of the semester, the student is reimbursed the guaranteed price and thus has only spent the difference for the 4 months of use for the textbook.
15. **Careful consideration of what constitutes a required text** (as opposed to a recommended text) can also help students. A recommended book is purchased by the Bookstore only in very small numbers while a required text is purchased in larger numbers. Few students buy recommended books. However, the solution to this is not to make a recommended book a required one. Students often buy books which are subsequently used only for a few of their pages and feel that they have spent a lot of money for what they perceive as very little value.
16. Where instructors are not using open educational resources which are available electronically, **course notes packages or courseware** (with reference to freely available online material), as opposed to textbooks, are often a very good way to provide students with what they need and cut costs. Document Imaging Centre is the vehicle whereby these are produced.
17. **Contact the Leddy Library and/or the Bookstore** to find out more about the ways in which instructors can help to reduce costs to students for required or recommended course materials.

As instructors consider these various options, they are reminded that copyright must be respected. The Leddy Library can assist with copyright questions or concerns. The Library is an active partner in compiling, creating and distributing open access resources. The Centre for Teaching and Learning is also a partner in helping identify textbooks or other course materials to meet the course's intended learning outcomes.

If you have any other recommendations that you think might be helpful in assisting students to have access to necessary course materials in a cost-effective way, please share these with others and the Student Caucus.