

Textbook Affordability & Transparency

Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) and Low Textbook Cost (LTC) Guidelines for Faculty

These guidelines assist faculty in designating courses as Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) or Low Textbook Cost (LTC) in the online class schedule. They support students by promoting price transparency and making informed course registration decisions.

The term **course materials** used below **excludes** laboratory fees and materials, required class supplies, calculators, etc. Course materials are defined as textbooks, workbooks, and online homework.

Which of the following applies to your course section? (*Select One*)

1. **No required course materials:** Optional materials may be suggested, but no mandatory purchases are required.

Example: a print or digital textbook is not required in the course at all.

2. **Covered course material Costs:** Course materials are required, but students do not incur any costs because funding sources such as grants or contracts, cover the costs.

3. **Uses Open Educational Resources (OER) course materials:** OER “are high-quality teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license, such as a Creative Commons license, that permits their free use and repurposing by others, and may include other resources that are **legally available and free of cost** to students. OER include, but are not limited to, full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, faculty-created content, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge.”¹

OER materials are always free to students. As an option, if available, print copies can be purchased by students.

Example: (Explore these OER repositories and collections for textbooks and other ancillary materials)

[LibreCommons](#)

[OER Repositories and Collections](#)

[OpenStax](#)

¹ OER Definition as noted in [Assembly Bill No. 607](#)

4. Uses only no-cost digital course materials: Uses accessible digital course materials with no cost to students.

Example: A curated collection of free, digital resources—such as YouTube videos, openly accessible websites, select library materials with unlimited access, and open access journals—that students can use in place of a traditional textbook. These materials are available at no cost and may include a mix of formats to support learning.

5. Combination of OER and no-cost digital materials: Combines OER and other free digital materials, with no cost to students.

Example: Using both an OER as a textbook and a collection of *free* digital materials to supplement the OER.

6. Low Textbook Cost (LTC): A digital or print textbook that is required for students to purchase but the total cost to the student is below the \$40 threshold.²

² Approved by SWC Academic Senate on 4/30/24.

