

2.07.00.00 Cost of Textbooks



2.07.00.00 Cost of Textbooks

Policy/Guideline Area

Academic Policies

Applicable Divisions

TCATs, Community Colleges

Purpose

Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.), Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1 specifies that the Tennessee Board of Regents develop policies for minimizing the cost of textbooks and ancillary course materials at its higher education institutions, while maintaining quality of education and academic freedom.

Definitions

An E-textbook, or electronic textbook, is an educational or instructional book in digital form.

Open Educational Resources (OER) are freely accessible, openly licensed text, media, and other digital assets that are useful for teaching, learning, and assessing as well as for research purposes.

Inclusive Access (IA) is a subscription-based model whereby students can gain immediate and complete access to digital course materials at substantially reduced cost. This usually includes a direct billing to students' accounts for the cost of the digital materials.

Bundled materials comprise a group of objects joined together by packaging or required to be purchased as an indivisible unit).

Policy/Guideline

Policy Provisions

The Tennessee Board of Regents seeks to address the student success barrier issues caused by continuously increasing textbook costs. Each institution governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents shall develop policies for minimizing the cost of textbooks and ancillary course materials.

No provision in this policy shall have the effect of diminishing the academic freedom faculty possess in selecting materials for their courses.

Procedures

- I. Students must have access to information regarding required and supplementary course materials through viable channels, including the institution's website, before courses begin. This information must include, but is not limited to, the International Standard Book Number (ISBN).
- II. Faculty members should consider practices that reduce the cost of course materials, such as adopting the least expensive option from the available products that meet the requirements of the course.
- III. Any on-campus bookstore selling textbooks to students as part of a bundled package also provide students the option of purchasing the textbooks and other study products separately from each other, if possible.
- IV. Digital materials, including e-textbooks, courseware, and supplemental course activities (exercises, quizzes, readings, lab workbooks) should be considered if those options are available for the titles chosen by the faculty for his/her courses.
 - A. Mechanisms for digital delivery include Open Educational Resources (OER), Inclusive Access (IA) through the campus bookstore operator, and traditional transactional process whereby students purchase access codes from the bookstore or online directly from the publisher.
 - B. If institutions implement an inclusive access model, students must be able to opt out of such program.

- V. Campus policies should not restrict the options for students to rent or purchase new or used textbooks from the vendor of their choice.

Sources

Authority

T.C.A. § 49-8-203; Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.), Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1; TBR. (2018). Providing students with the tools for success: A systemic digital approach. [White paper].

History

Tennessee Board of Regents meeting, September 27, 2007; Revised at TBR Board meeting September 19 & 20, 2019; Ministerial Revisions February 14, 2025.