GUIDELINES FOR PRESCRIBED MATERIALS

Based on: S 4706/20

One of the most important and basic requirements for student success is to ensure that all students have access to essential course materials. The following underlying principles for selecting appropriate materials should be taken into consideration:

• The cost of textbooks are unaffordable for most students. It is therefore essential that lecturers endeavour not to prescribe an expensive textbook when they only use a few chapters from it.

• Where possible, students should be provided with free, open educational resources (OERs) from sources such as:

  o OpenStax: https://openstax.org/
  o OpenSUNY textbooks: https://textbooks.opensuny.org/
  o Open Textbook Library: https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/
  o OER Commons: https://www.oercommons.org/

• Where open resources are not available, the responsibility to acquire the prescribed text book remains the responsibility of the student.

• In cases, where academics benefit financially from the sales, the textbook may only be prescribed with approval of the Senate. This approval is only valid for a three-year period.

Procedure for the selection of textbooks:

- **Step 1:** If lecturers cannot find quality OERS, the Library can be approached to support them in finding relevant open resources. Alternatively publisher representatives could be contacted for free evaluation copies of commercial textbooks.

- **Step 2:** Lecturers use the guidelines in Appendix A to do a quality screening of textbooks or materials.

- **Step 3:** A peer review and shortlisting of the textbooks/materials is conducted.

- **Step 4:** The Head of Department approves the selected textbooks.

In respect of prescribed textbooks where academics will benefit financially, the Head of Department's submission to Senate should include the following:

- A motivation including a quality screening in terms of Appendix A as well as a peer review of the textbooks/materials. The utilisation of a textbook by other South African tertiary institutions should be included in the motivation.

Institutional payment for digital content

Many publishers have developed adaptive learning environments. For high-impact service modules, the University of Pretoria allows for an institutional payment model (including the licensing of digital content in the module fees). This new generation of 'textbooks' creates a personalised learning experience by adapting the content according to students' individual learning needs based on data from their responses to questions, tasks and experiences. The recommended procedure in cases where such resources are being considered is:

Year 1: Conduct a free module-based pilot study (with the permission of the HoD) and determine:
  • Student access to data and devices
  • Student performance improvement
  • Students' views and experiences
  • clickUP (BlackBoard) integration potential

Year 2: Apply for institutional leniences and include the licensing in the module fees at a reduced price.

Requirements:
  1. The lecturer writes a motivation.
  2. The HoD approves the motivation.
  3. The Dean approves the motivation.
  4. The Legal Services Division approves the agreement between the publisher and the department (HoD).
  5. The HoD submits the application to the Director: Department for Education Innovation, for approval.
  6. The HoD submits the application to the Director of Finance for approval.

Appendix A: Guidelines for evaluating textbooks, electronic resources & OERs

Relevance

	Learning outcomes are addressed.
	This textbook is prescribed at other South African tertiary institutions.

Content accuracy & clarity

	Scholarship is accurate and current in terms of the subject matter and content. There are no significant content errors or omissions.
	Coverage of material is clear, logical, comprehensible, and balanced.
	Multiple perspectives and points of view on course topics.
	Major theories are appropriately addressed.
	There are no grammatical, spelling or typing errors.

Interactivity & student engagement

	The content is presented at a level appropriate for higher education and suitable for students' level of study.
	It encourages active learning, class participation and/or collaboration.
	It includes a mix of educational approaches.
	It includes multiple modalities (eg graphics, tables, and information other than text) to support student learning.
	It include /additional supplementary student resources (e.g. links to study guides, videos, etc.).
	It includes a variety of assessments that promote meaningful learning and engagement.

Cultural relevance & sensitivity

	The content promotes inclusivity through content and classroom activities.
	It develops an attitude of acceptance and respect for others' opinions.
	It enhances meaning through collaborative experiences.
	It provides for self-reflection and self-assessment.

Only for electronic resources: Accessibility

	The content is available for use on the first day of class.
	It is accessible to students with disabilities (eg hearing impairment, vision impairment).
	Images and other graphics have alternate texts (Alt tags) or long descriptions.
	Audio and video resources have transcripts, subtitles or closed captioning.
	The content is accessible in multiple modes (eg for download, printing, reading online, mobile).

Only for electronic resources: Technical accuracy & readability

	Interface and design are easy to navigate.
	Design features enhance learning.
	Audio, video and graphics are of high quality.
	There are no broken links or obsolete formats.

Price, licensing & adaptability

	Only for OERs: The license allows for educational (re)use, adaptations and modifications.
	Price

Department for
Education Innovation
Departement vir Onderwysinnovasie
Kgoro ya TšweletSopele ya Thuto

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA