



# COLLEGE POLICY GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

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POLICY TYPE: Academic & Instruction  
POLICY TITLE: Textbook Adoption Policy

## GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES:

Typically, full-time students can spend over \$500 per semester on textbooks and course materials. In a 2016 Student Senate survey, sixty percent (60%) of Madison College student respondents indicated these costs have prevented them from enrolling in an additional course. The textbook adoption process has been identified as one of the root causes of the high cost. At the same time, the college recognizes the value of Academic Freedom and supports the selection of high quality course materials that create vibrant learning environments for students.

## Core Principles

Madison College supports a standardized textbook adoption procedure that aims to enhance student retention and success. Based on research into current best policies and practices, the college embraces the following core principles to guide the textbook adoption process:

**Collaboration** in textbook adoption decisions across all faculty opens the door to greater cost consciousness among all instructors, a greater sense of community and inclusion between full-time and part-time instructors, and a greater likelihood for textbook uniformity and its associated cost reductions. Collaboration also reinforces the twin goals of quality materials and low cost.

**Transparency and Accountability** means that textbook and course material selections and their costs are easily accessible to all college constituents, including among others, current and potential students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents, members of the community, and internet audiences. The goals of this principle are to eliminate “hidden costs” for all courses and to be accountable for cost-conscious textbook and course material selections.

**Flexibility and Innovation** places textbook adoption decisions with faculty teams, in recognition of faculty expertise and of the reality that any cost reduction approach may work for some departments or programs but not for others. Further, this principle acknowledges that no single policy can anticipate all of the future avenues for low and no-cost texts and course materials and encourages faculty to pursue those avenues by following the established adoption guidelines.

**Low-cost to No-cost** underscores the policy's goal of eliminating textbook cost as a barrier to students' educational pursuits.

### **Operational Guidelines**

Madison College recognizes the complexity of textbook and course material selection across disciplines and programs and the importance of this process in reducing student costs, providing quality education and meeting external licensing or credentialing standards. Given the complexity of this process, the Student Affairs Council recommends that college faculty pursue a variety of options with the goal of reducing textbook cost as a barrier to education for students. Research has identified the following models and practices as the most effective current means to reach that goal.

1) All classes: faculty teams adopt these practices in their textbook selection process.

a) Faculty teams adhere to established semester textbook adoption deadlines

This practice promotes transparency by giving students access to textbook costs before course registration and the bookstore the greatest flexibility in securing used textbooks and offering the highest price for buy-backs. Includes equipment, tools and materials in addition to textbooks.

b) Use the bookstore as a consultant when selecting textbooks

This practice promotes collaboration by encouraging faculty teams to work with the bookstore early in the process, and getting consultation about what might be the best, low-cost option for students. The bookstore offers expertise and knowledge about what might be the best format in order to maximize cost savings for students.

c) ALL textbook adoptions are submitted to the bookstore, including no-text or no-cost texts

This practice promotes transparency for students by giving them access to textbook costs and allowing the bookstore to accurately track and access inventory needs. It also provides accountability by generating consistent data for evaluating policy implementation success.

d) All required course materials (including web-based) and texts are adopted only when used substantially in the course.

This practice supports transparency and accountability by requiring students to only purchase materials that are essential to the course. Non-essential materials are listed as "recommended" or "optional" and are subject to the same cost-conscious selection process.

e) Faculty teams weigh reusability versus short-term cost savings

This practice supports the low-cost to no-cost principle. Publishers often offer “cheaper” alternatives to complete print textbooks that are often not available for buy-back or in used editions. These alternatives include loose-leaf notebooks, customized compilations, and e-texts (access codes). Over the length of the adoption cycle, these alternatives may not generate the same cost-savings as used print texts.

f) Faculty teams adopt cost-saving alternatives to commercial textbooks

The use of cost-saving alternatives support flexibility, innovation and low-cost to no-cost principles: since these alternatives are of minimal to no cost to students, faculty have the flexibility to use them in innovative ways.

- i. **Open Educational Resources: (OERs)** are no-cost and copyright-free educational materials available for teaching, learning, research and other purposes. Faculty can access multiple OER sources online and may pursue private Foundation funding to develop courses and degree tracks that use them exclusively.

The Madison College Library has put together an Open Educational Resources Guide to help faculty develop OERs and to provide resources related to OERs. The Madison College Library is available for one-on-one consultation with Madison College faculty to help them implement and develop OERs for their classes.

- ii. **Trade books:** Books published by a commercial publisher and intended for general readership. They are widely available as used, and the cost is quite minimal.
- iii. **Articles compiled by instructors:** Many instructors already post PDFs and hyperlinks in Blackboard in lieu of adopting textbooks.
- iv. **Free on-line or digital resources:** Non-profit organizations, research institutes, educational consortiums and periodicals often provide no-cost, web-based resources that can be useful supplemental materials.

2) **Practices across multiple-sections of the same course:** Faculty teams adopt one or more of the following options in selecting their textbooks.

a) Adopt one textbook (uniform textbook adoption)

This practice supports transparency and accountability by providing savings by generating a large number of used textbooks and supporting the highest buy-back price. It also supports **transparency** for students and creates leverage in securing discounts from publishers. Such coordination also reinforces **collaboration** among faculty.

b) Adopt limited number of approved core textbooks

A survey of data provided by the bookstore of text adoptions in Spring 2017 showed a wide range of approaches that extend from a single uniform text across all sections (1 text: 12 sections) to a different text version adopted for virtually every other section (14 texts: 32 sections). In the latter case, faculty adopted multiple editions of the same text and/or different bundles of the same core text. Please refer to the table below:

Number of sections offered (per semester)	Maximum number of approved core texts
1-5	1
6-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21 or more	5

This practice supports **flexibility** by allowing faculty to select which of the approved core texts to use and to adopt **low-cost to no-cost** supplemental materials. It also provides savings by generating a large number of used textbooks and supports the highest buy-back price. Lastly, it supports **transparency** for students in course selection and allows them to change sections without bearing additional textbook costs.

c) Adopt limited number of access codes or bundles

This practice supports **transparency, accountability, flexibility and innovation**. The coordinated use of access codes or bundles across sections provides the bookstore leverage to negotiate discounts with publishers and may provide students with quality supplemental online resources. Further, this approach reduces the cost variance across all sections. **Please note:** access codes and bundles are not available for buy-back or in “used” editions. Through **collaboration**, the instructors will generate cost savings and foster educational quality

d) Coordinated use of cost-saving alternatives to commercial texts

This practice supports **collaboration, flexibility, and innovation** at minimal cost.