FAQ's: Reporting Affordable Textbooks at UTSA

1. Why do I need to report my courses that use affordable textbooks?
   The reporting framework ensures UTSA’s compliance with SB 810, signed by Governor Abbott in 2017, that requires tracking by institutions of higher education using open educational resources in order to improve transparency for students. That bill has become a part of the Texas Education Code, Sec. 51.452.

2. What are open educational resources as defined by SB 810?
   OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or that have been released under an intellectual property license that allows for free use, reuse, modification, and sharing with others, including full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge. (OER as defined by the Texas Education Code)

3. How is UTSA defining “affordable” courses?
   An affordable course is defined at UTSA as a course that uses only required textbooks with a combined total purchase price of $40 or less per student per course.

4. How did UTSA determine the Low Cost Textbook filter would have a $40 threshold?
   UTSA made the decision to select $40 as the low cost threshold because many other schools that have implemented course markings have chosen this as their low-cost designation, including Houston Community College, Mount Hood Community College, Maricopa County Community College, and more. We are in discussions with Student Government reps on the low-cost designation, and depending on the outcome of that discussion, the threshold may change in the coming semesters. If that happens, this form, and communication around it, will be updated to reflect the changes.

5. SB 810 speaks specifically to OER. Why do other affordable textbooks need to be reported?
   While open educational resources provide more benefits for students and faculty when compared to affordable resources, the OER landscape is still sparse in some areas, and there may not be OER available for your course even though you might like to adopt them in order to help your students with access, cost, or
FAQ's: Reporting Affordable Textbooks at UTSA

both. We want to recognize your efforts to help your students with affordability and access while also providing transparency for UTSA students looking for courses using low cost textbooks.

6. **If I use print reserve materials at the library, is that considered affordable?**
   No. While we appreciate your efforts to work with the library to provide other access options for your students to the learning materials in your course, courses that use print library reserve books are not comparable to courses using online library materials. Print reserve materials require that students physically visit the library in order to access required readings, and there is a limit to the number of students that can use print library reserve materials simultaneously as compared to library e-books, which can be used by all students in a course remotely and simultaneously.

7. **How is UTSA defining “required” educational resources?**
   Required is defined as a learning resource that students must have access to in order to complete the course or an assignment within the course with a passing grade or better. If instructors list an educational resource as required for a grade for either a single assignment or overall success in the course, a passing grade or better, then it is considered a required educational resource.

8. **When should I report affordable textbooks?**
   As soon as you have your course assignments for the upcoming semester and have decided that you are using affordable textbooks, you can submit the Affordable Textbooks Reporting Form. Communication will be shared with faculty as closely to the following timeline as possible in order to ensure the Low Cost Textbook attribute is applied to courses reported in advance of registration:

   - Fall registration: April 1st
   - Summer Registration: March 1st
   - Spring Registration: October 1st

9. **How often should I submit the Affordable Textbooks form?**
   The form needs to be submitted in advance of the semester that you are teaching the course. Ideally, we need to have your form before the start of registration for the upcoming semester in order to ensure that your course is searchable under the Low Cost Textbook Filter for students as they register.
FAQ's: Reporting Affordable Textbooks at UTSA

10. How will students find my course?
Students will use the Low Cost Textbook filter in the UTSA Class Schedules in order to find yours and other courses using affordable textbooks. We are working to get a Free Textbook filter in the course search that can also be used to find courses with zero textbook costs. Coming soon!

11. Who receives the information reported through the form?
The UTSA Libraries, Office of the Registrar, the Campus Bookstore, and University Technology Solutions collaborate in order to provide a reporting mechanism for UTSA faculty and instructors adopting affordable textbooks.

12. How do I report affordable textbooks for late course assignments?
Submit the Affordable Learning Materials Form as soon as you have your course assignments. We receive notifications each time a course is reported and will add your course to the filter as soon as possible.

13. How do I report changes? What do I do if I have already reported my course and it is not showing up?
14. What happens if I don’t report my courses?
While we highly encourage instructors to report affordable educational resources, there is no penalty for not reporting. However, reporting ensures that UTSA students can see your good-faith efforts to help reduce the cost of attending college at UTSA. UTSA Libraries is also working with UTSA Advising to promote the filter to students registering for courses. If your course is not reported, it will not show up in the list of courses using affordable textbooks. We highly encourage you to report your courses in order to improve transparency for UTSA students.