FAQ's: Reporting Affordable Textbooks at UTSA

1. Why do I need to report courses that use affordable textbooks? How will students find my course(s) once reported?

By reporting your course(s), you enable UTSA students looking for classes using affordable textbooks to find them, including yours. During registration, students can apply the Low Cost Textbook filter, highlighted below, in the UTSA Class Schedule. We are working to get a Free Textbook filter and icon in the course search that can also be used to find courses with zero textbook costs-more soon!

The affordable textbook reporting framework also 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 since become a part of the Texas Education Code, Sec. 51.452.

2. How did UTSA determine the Low Cost Textbook filter would have a designation of $40 or less?

The Libraries, the Office of the Registrar, the Campus Bookstore, and University Technology Solutions partnered with UTSA Student Government Association to
arrive at the $40 or less low cost textbook designation. UTSA students bear the
cost of purchasing textbooks, and, as the ultimate end-users of the Low-Cost
Textbook filter, we wanted to ensure that their voice is a driving factor in this
reporting framework. We also consulted case studies on course markings at
other institutions of higher learning, including Houston Community College,
Mount Hood Community College, Maricopa County Community College, and
various Texas institutions.

3. 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)

4. SB 810’s focus is OER. Why are we reporting other affordable textbooks?

Per Texas Education Code, Sec. 51.452, each individual Texas institution must
provide a mechanism for instructors to report OER adoption. While OER provide
more benefits as compared to other affordable learning materials, the OER
landscape is developing: there may not be OER available for your course yet
even though you would like to adopt OER. We value all faculty efforts to ease
students’ textbook burdens, and we also seek to provide transparency for UTSA
students looking for courses using any low cost textbooks—and not just OER.

5. 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.
FAQ's: Reporting Affordable Textbooks at UTSA

6. 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
Spring Registration: October 1st
Summer Registration: March 1st

7. How often should I submit the Affordable Textbooks form?

The form needs to be submitted in advance of each 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.

8. 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 notification each time a course is reported and will add your course to the filter as soon as possible.

9. How do I report changes? What do I do if I have already reported my course and it is not showing up?

Email oer@utsa.edu for answers.

10. Who receives the information reported through the form?

The UTSA Libraries, Office of the Registrar, the Campus Bookstore, and University Technology Solutions.
11. 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.

12. 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.