ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION – ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
POLICY NUMBER – ACAF 7.13
POLICY TITLE – TEXTBOOK ADOPTION
SCOPE OF POLICY – USC UPSTATE
DATE OF REVISION – JULY 29, 2024
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER - PROVOST
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

PURPOSE

This policy sets forth the responsibilities of faculty members and their designees with respect to the adoption of textbooks and supplemental materials, as well as the obligation of the University to disclose certain textbook information to the University community.

The reason for this policy is to ensure that students are provided with timely access to textbook information so that they may make informed decisions and take cost-saving measures when purchasing textbooks. The reason for the policy is also to comply with legal requirements pertaining to textbook adoptions.

This policy is not intended to limit the academic freedom of faculty in their selection of course materials for students.

DEFINITIONS

Custom Textbook: A textbook that is compiled by a publisher or approved custom publishing vendor at the direction of a faculty member or their designee. A custom textbook may include, alone or in combination, items such as selections from original instructor materials, previously copyrighted publisher materials, and copyrighted third-party works.

ISBN: International Standard Book Number.

Supplemental Materials: Educational material developed to accompany a textbook that may include printed materials, homework platforms, website access, and electronically distributed materials.

Textbook: A physical textbook, including a Custom Textbook, used for or in conjunction with a course. Textbooks may also include eBooks and other digital content.

Inclusive Access: Digital content provided via the University's Learning Management System or currently Blackboard, and the cost of the materials are charged directly to the students' tuition bill. This provision includes a Federally mandated opt-out option for students who wish not to participate in this cost saving program.

University Bookstore: The USC Upstate Bookstore, owned, and operated by the University of South Carolina Upstate and located at 300 North Campus Blvd, Spartanburg, SC 29303.

POLICY STATEMENT

The University shall establish firm deadlines and procedures for the adoption of textbooks for upcoming semesters. These deadlines and procedures shall be set to enable the institution to fully comply with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, including the requirement that textbook information (including ISBN and prices) be provided to students at the time of registration.

PROCEDURES

A. Textbook Adoptions

All faculty, or their designees, shall place their orders for Textbooks and Supplemental Materials with the University Bookstore in accordance with the following schedule:

1. On or before October 15 for the spring semester

2. On or before March 30 for the summer sessions

3. On or before April 15 for the fall semester

Faculty members assigned to a course after these deadlines shall place their orders on as timely a basis as possible or use the departmentally chosen course materials.

The adoption process will include the indication of whether a textbook is required, recommended, optional or attend class first and should include to the extent possible an indication of whether an alternate (e.g., earlier) edition of the textbook may be used. Timely adoption reporting of textbooks and supplemental materials is required for all university courses; cases where no materials are required must also be reported in accordance with the schedule above.

Textbook adoptions orders placed with the University Bookstore shall include the following information regarding the Textbooks and Supplemental Materials where applicable:

1. Faculty name and contact information.

2. Author, title, publisher, copyright date, edition, and ISBN (International Standard Book Number) if available.

3. Course, course number, section number; and

4. Number of students enrolled in the course or class and the maximum student enrollment for such course or class.

The bookstore provides a unique URL login for each faculty member assigned to a course(s) each term via email. The link allows faculty members to easily adopt or readopt course materials and most of the required information from above will be filled out automatically.

Department chairs/heads will be responsible for ensuring that all pertinent courses under their authority have adoptions submitted by the deadline, even in instances where no instructor has been assigned for a course section as of the announced adoption deadline date. The University Bookstore will be responsible for updating department chairs/heads prior to the deadline about courses that do not have adoptions submitted.

Department chairs/heads will be responsible for ensuring that the course schedule is prepared and submitted to the Registrar in time for the Registrar to publish the schedule at least 70 days prior to the end of the preceding semester and the Registrar will be responsible for ensuring the schedule is made available in this timeframe.

The University Bookstore will publish a list of missing adoptions to be submitted to the Provost and Deans on a weekly basis from two weeks after the initial textbook request is sent to faculty until all orders are submitted for each college.

B. Minimum Adoption Periods

Minimum adoption periods help to keep textbook costs down for students and allow students to sell back textbooks after use. In this section, textbook refers specifically to a book that is resalable, as opposed to one-time usage materials (e.g., workbooks), supplemental materials, or books that have limited resale value or are a part of the inclusive access program.

The University establishes minimum adoption periods based on the category of course offering:

I.) General Education Courses/ Lower Divisional Courses: 100/200 level courses will have a minimum three-year adoption period, and II.) Major Courses/ Upper Divisional Courses and Graduate Courses: 300+ level courses will have a minimum two-year adoption period. Courses with course descriptions that allow for the topic to change regularly are excluded from these minimum adoption periods.

The University identifies reasonable exceptions to these requirements; however, all exceptions must be approved in advance by the Dean level prior to initiating a change:

1. Editions go out of print.
2. Substantive changes are made in either the course description or the textbook.
3. A “new edition” review period is needed, to give instructors time to review latest editions and determine whether those editions justify a change. This review should take place before the adoption deadline. No new edition will be ordered unless specified by the instructor, subject to the length of adoption rules.
4. Significant change in the body of knowledge pertinent to the course.
5. English “readers” and special topics courses.

C. Textbook Disclosures

1. To the maximum extent practicable, the University shall provide access on its web course schedule to the ISBN and retail price information of required and recommended Textbooks and Supplemental Materials for each course listed on the University's course schedule used for preregistration and registration purposes. If the ISBN is not available for a particular Textbook or Supplemental Material, the University shall provide, to the extent practicable, access to the name of the author, title, publisher, and copyright date of the Textbook or Supplemental Material.

2. The University, to the extent practicable, shall disseminate information regarding opportunities for renting textbooks or for purchasing used textbooks, alternative content delivery programs, and other cost-saving strategies.

3. The Upstate Bookstore maintains a website that shows comparison pricing and multiple purchasing options depending on the title's status and/or format.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE, AND FEDERAL POLICIES

ACAF 1.34 – Use of Self-Authored Materials by Instructor
ACAF 1.35 – Copyright
Higher Education Opportunity Act – 2008

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

- July 29, 2024 – New policy approved by Executive Leadership Team and USC General Counsel