

Policy Name: Course Materials and Open Educational Resources (OER)

- **Problem trying to solve:** The development of this policy is directly connected to Virginia Code [§ 23.1-1308](#). Mason did not have a cited policy on low-cost materials and was out of compliance.
- **Related Law and Policy:**
 - The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with [GEN-08-12, the Higher Education Opportunity Act \(HEOA\)](#) and Virginia Code [§ 23.1-1308](#).
 - [UP1307 Procurement and/or Development of Administrative Systems/Applications](#)
 - [UP1308 Information and Communications Technology Accessibility](#)

Goal of this policy:

- To set guidelines that encourage faculty to consider cost, to not require any purchases that will not actually be used in classes, and to help communicate with students (both about courses that use low-cost materials and where financial resources might be available).

Policy Statement

- In accordance with related laws and policies, George Mason University encourages efforts to minimize the cost of Course Materials while maintaining the quality of our students' education.

To meet this goal:

- Faculty, academic departments, and administrative units involved in the selection, adoption, and implementation of Course Materials:
 - Shall not demand or receive any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services, or anything, present or promised, as an inducement for requiring students to purchase a specific textbook required for coursework or instruction. However, such faculty may receive (i) sample copies, instructor's copies, or instructional material not to be sold and (ii) royalties or other compensation from sales of textbooks that include such instructor's own writing or work.
 - Shall commit to the use of all components of bundled materials before adoption, acknowledge bookstore's quoted retail prices for transparency, and consider previous editions when substantive differences are minimal. Where available, individual bundle components shall be made available when cost-effective for both the institution and students.
 - Shall integrate Open Educational Resources (OER), Low-Cost Materials, and No-Cost Materials, where appropriate while maintaining the quality of education.
 - Shall identify courses using No-Cost or Low-Cost Materials in the registration system, as appropriate.
 - Shall ensure textbook adoptions are made with sufficient lead time to university-managed or contract-managed bookstores so as to confirm availability of the requested materials and, when possible, ensure maximum availability of used textbooks.

- To ensure transparency in course materials, the university:
 - Shall maintain centralized textbook listings with ISBNs and pricing on institutional websites.
 - Shall provide course tagging mechanisms for faculty to identify courses using No-Cost or Low-Cost Material
 - Shall support faculty in evaluating and selecting cost-effective materials. [The Mason OER Metafinder \(MOM\)](#) and InfoGuides related to [OER materials](#) provide additional guidance and outline available resources.
 - Shall implement measures to support students with financial constraints. No funds provided for financial aid from university bookstore revenue shall be counted in the calculation for state appropriations for student financial aid.