



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
Department of Education Innovation

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## PROCEDURE FOR SELECTION OF PRESCRIBED MATERIALS

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## **1. PURPOSE**

The document provides a criterion-based framework of principles for selecting prescribed course materials. The procedures ensure that all students have access to top-quality course materials.

## **2. SCOPE**

This procedure provides background, the University position and guidance for selecting prescribed course materials used in teaching and learning. They apply to all academic staff at the University and are overseen by the Senate Committee for Teaching and Learning.

## **3. CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

The University strives to make top-quality resources available to all students to promote student learning and success. Using course materials of poor academic quality may limit the quality of teaching and learning and could cause the university reputational damage. Thus, guidelines have been established to evaluate the prescribed course materials used.

## **4. KEY PRINCIPLES**

The principles for selecting textbooks or educational materials should be guided by the achievement of specific learning outcomes, with these outcomes serving as the foundational basis from which all textbooks, prescribed materials, or any other forms of content are identified and curated. This approach ensures that the selection of educational resources is directly aligned with the intended learning objectives, facilitating a targeted and outcome-driven educational experience. Materials should be chosen for their ability to effectively support the attainment of these outcomes, promoting a coherent and integrated learning journey that is responsive to the educational goals set forth.

Acquiring a copy of the prescribed textbook remains the student's responsibility where open resources are unavailable. A basic requirement for student success is ensuring all students have access to essential course materials. The costs of textbooks may be unaffordable for many students, therefore:

- Lecturers must avoid prescribing a textbook when they only use a few chapters from the textbook.
- Students should be provided with free, open educational resources (OERs) from sources where possible.

Procedure for the selection of textbooks:

- Step 1: If lecturers cannot find quality OERs, they should contact the publisher representatives for free evaluation copies of commercial textbooks. The library can also help lecturers find open resources.
- Step 2: Lecturers should use the guidelines in Appendix A to screen textbooks or materials for quality.
- Step 3: A peer review and shortlisting of the textbooks/materials should be conducted.
- Step 4: The Head of the Department must approve the selected textbooks.

When academics stand to gain financially from textbook sales, prescribing such textbooks is contingent upon obtaining approval from the respective Faculty Board. This approval remains valid for a period of three years. The submission to the Faculty Board should include a thorough justification, encompassing a quality assessment outlined in Appendix A and a peer review of the textbooks/materials.

#### **4.1. Institutional payment for digital content**

Many publishers have developed adaptive learning environments. For high-impact service modules, the University of Pretoria allows for an institutional payment model (including the licensing of digital content in the module fees). This new generation of 'textbooks' creates a personalised learning experience by adapting the content according to student's individual learning needs based on data from their responses to questions, tasks and experiences. The recommended procedure in cases where such resources are being considered is:

Year 1: Conduct a free module-based pilot study (with the permission of the HoD) and determine:

- Student access to data and devices
- Student performance improvement
- Students' views and experiences
- clickUP (Blackboard) integration potential

Year 2: Institution licences (include the licensing in the module fees at a reduced price)

Requirements:

1. The HoD approves the motivation and recommends it to the Dean.
2. The Dean approves and recommends the motivation.
3. The service level agreement (SLA) is drafted with input from the university's Legal Services Division and approved by the Department for Education Innovation and Finance before the HoD signs the agreement.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

<b>Course material</b>	Course material refers to any prescribed textbooks, electronic resources, articles, or OERs..
<b>Open educational resources (OERs)</b>	Teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open licence that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.’ <sup>1</sup>

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<b>Lecturers</b>	Each lecturer is responsible for ensuring that top-quality course materials are prescribed and aligned to the curriculum of the module, programme and intended learning outcomes.
<b>Heads of departments</b>	<p>The heads of departments ensure that lecturers use top-quality course materials and that all related processes, such as peer review or Faculty Board approval are followed.</p> <p>For institutional payment for digital content, the HoD approves and recommends it to the Dean.</p>
<b>Dean</b>	For institutional payment for digital content, the Dean approves and recommends the motivation.
<b>Director: Department for Education Innovation</b>	For institutional payment for digital content, the Director of the Department for Education Innovation approves the service level agreement (SLA).
<b>Director: Finance Department</b>	For institutional payment for digital content, the Director of the Finance Department approves the service level agreement (SLA).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/building-knowledge-societies/oer>

## 7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

[Policy on curriculum design and development](#)  
[Procurement Policy](#)

## 8. PROCEDURE LIFECYCLE

This procedure will be reviewed based on changes in the Policy on Teaching and Learning.

## 9. DOCUMENT METADATA

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**APPENDIX A**

**GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC RESOURCES &  
OERS**

<b>Relevance</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning outcomes are addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	This textbook is prescribed at other South African tertiary institutions.
<b>Content accuracy &amp; clarity</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scholarship is accurate and current in terms of the subject matter and content. There are no significant content errors or omissions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coverage of material is clear, logical, comprehensible, and balanced.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple perspectives and points of view on course topics.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Major theories are appropriately addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no grammatical, spelling or typing errors.
<b>Interactivity &amp; student engagement</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The content is presented at a level appropriate for higher education and suitable for students' level of study.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It encourages active learning, class participation or collaboration.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It includes a mix of instructional approaches.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It includes multiple modalities (e.g. graphics, tables, and information other than text) to support student learning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It includes additional/supplementary lecturer or student resources (eg study guides, tutorials).
<input type="checkbox"/>	It includes effective and engaging student assessments of the learning outcomes, objectives, and student understanding of the material.
<b>Cultural relevance &amp; sensitivity</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The content establishes inclusion through content and classroom activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It develops an attitude of acceptance and respect for others' opinions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It enhances meaning through collaborative experiences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It provides for self-reflection and self-assessment.
<b>Only for electronic resources: Accessibility</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The content is available for use on the first day of class.

<input type="checkbox"/>	It is accessible to students with disabilities (e.g. hearing impairment, vision impairment).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Images and other graphics have alternate texts (Alt tags) or long descriptions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Audio and video resources have transcripts, subtitles or closed captioning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The content is accessible in multiple modes (eg for download, printing, reading online, mobile).
<b>Only for electronic resources: Technical accuracy &amp; readability</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The interface and design are easy to navigate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Design features enhance learning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Audio, video and graphics are of high quality.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no broken links or obsolete formats.
<b>Price, licensing &amp; adaptability</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Only for OERs: The licence allows for educational (re)use, adaptations and modifications.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Price

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