

[The College of Southern Maryland](#)

Checklist for Adopting Textbooks

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Report from the *ad hoc* Committee on a Unified Textbook Adoption Process
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When selecting a textbook for a CSM course, a faculty member or textbook adoption committee should consider the following factors. The checklist is intended as a set of guidelines, not as a list of requirements. The factors are derived from Maryland legislation that became law effective July 1, 2009: College Textbook Competition and Affordability Act. The law is in response to mounting student complaints about unreasonable and rising textbook costs. The factors listed apply mainly to pricing and format, but also to the extent to which a textbook is required of students. However, the law emphasizes that faculty have the academic freedom to choose course materials based on criteria of their own choosing, including the appropriateness of the content, how that content meets the objectives of the course, and how the text may take into account both the needs of the faculty members teaching the course and the students taking it.

Number and name of course: _____

Text's author(s): _____

Title: _____

Publisher: _____ Edition: _____ Publication Date: _____

ISBN: _____

Note: Before selecting a text, faculty should consult with Dona Batten, Text and Trade Books Manager.	
Which of the available formats are available for the proposed text(s)?	Net price (to the college store) for each format
<input type="checkbox"/> paper or soft binding	
<input type="checkbox"/> hard bound	
<input type="checkbox"/> loose-leaf (no binding; shrink wrapped). <i>Note: The cost may be ~50% less, but no buy-back to the bookstore is possible.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic book (e-book).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Access Code: <i>(A licensing price that includes 18- weeks to 1 year online access.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Custom Text: <i>See item below</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other format:	

__ **Consider the limits of each format in which the course is taught: e.g., face-to-face, Web-based, Web-hybrid, mini-session. The same textbook may not be appropriate for all formats.** For example, an electronic text (e-text) may be recommended for a web-based course, but it may not be appropriate for a face-to-face class.

__ **Consider a black and white edition of the text, if available.** (*Comment: When texts are printed in black/white only, the cost differential may be significant, typically 30-40% less than a full-color text. Unless color is essential to the content, faculty may consider the option when all other factors are equal.*)

__ **Consider how much of the textbook is required.** (*Comment: The new law requires a “majority of the assigned material will be used in the course unless it would be in the student’s financial interest to purchase separate materials.” If you require less than 51% of the text, then consider an alternative text or an alternative format, such as a custom text or a short edition of the same text. Exceptions to this rule may include a text that includes material for two or more sequels to the course, or an anthology from which less than 50% may be required. In such cases, your choice should take into account the overall cost to the students if the material were split into separately purchased texts. Once a textbook has been adopted, however, the course syllabus should reflect that “a majority” of the course materials is required.*)

__ **Consider a custom edition.** (*Comment: Custom texts may consist of selected chapters from one or more textbooks, along with professor-prepared handouts and lecture notes. The advantage to the students --and for maintaining compliance with the state law-- is that only those chapters required of the students are included in the text. These texts are soft bound, usually printed in black and white, and if the text is used continually for several semesters (i.e., in the buy-back program), the CSM College Bookstore will buy the text back from students, for an additional savings to the student. The price of a custom textbook ranges from 30 to 40% less than the same text in its complete hard bound edition.*)

__ **Consider your text for the rental program.** (*Comment: The cost to a student to rent a textbook is 60% of the purchase price. Even custom texts may qualify if the text will be used for at least two years, if the text includes no software, and if it is not bundled with other materials.*)

__ **Consider adopting a textbook minus “bundled materials:” (i.e., “One or more college textbooks or other supplemental material that are packaged together to be sold as course materials for one price.”— Maryland law.) If a “bundle” is essential, determine the net cost of each item in the bundle.** (*Comment: The actual cost of a textbook bundle will be higher than for the text by itself. If a student is not expected or not required to use one or more items in a bundle – such as a student workbook or student guide – then the publisher must provide a price for the text in its “unbundled” state, including the cost of each supplement separately. All pieces must be available for purchase separately.*)

__ **Determine the percent a new textbook edition has changed from the previous edition.** (*Comment: The law stipulates that the faculty member must be aware of the changes before adopting a new edition. The publisher should be asked and must provide this percent along with an explanation of those changes.*)

__ Determine how long a previous (old) edition can be used when adopting a new edition.

(Comment: Faculty should work with the College Store in ascertaining this information before adopting a text. If the new edition is basically unchanged from the earlier one, consider allowing students to use an old edition, with a caveat that students cannot expect faculty to provide detailed page references for any text other than the required current edition.)

__ Ascertain the net price of the new edition compared with the old edition. *(Comment: the CSM Bookstore computes the **Net price** by dividing the retail price by 0.72 and adding \$1.00 per text for shipping.)*

__ For multiple sections of the same course and for the same course taught on more than one campus, department chairs should consider encouraging faculty to adopt the same textbook for all sections and across campuses, unless a compelling reason can be shown. *(Comment: Students who switch sections are at a financial disadvantage if the text is different in a new section of the same course. Furthermore, if the texts are different, students taking courses on more than one campus cannot now purchase all texts from the same campus bookstore.)*

__ Consider alternative sources for course materials that are free or low-cost, such as FlatworldKnowledge.com, Bartleby.com, Wikibooks.com, OpenCulture.com, and other “[open source](#)” course materials. *(Comment: Adopters should consult the Maryland Higher Education Commission Faculty Advisory Council’s “Tips for Obtaining Textbooks” for more suggestions on adopting textbooks: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Fac-mhec> Students should be advised to take into account the total cost of printing a so-called “open source” or free text, including the cost of ink and paper, and the lack of any resale value, and to advise students accordingly.)*

__ Consider a maximum price point and negotiate with publishers to match that price. *(Comment: Adopters may be able to persuade a publisher to sell at a reduced price if a department agrees to stay with the same text for an extended period, such as two years or more. It is important, however, to negotiate before adopting the text and get the price quote in writing.)*

__ Academic departments should consider keeping track of efforts by faculty to curtail costs and to encourage alternate formats when selecting texts for their classes. *(Comment: The Maryland law requires MHEC to prepare a report documenting efforts taken by all segments of higher education in complying with the law.)*