

Academic Governing Council Decision Report

Approved by AGC Executive Committee on June 12, 2025

7.3 Instructional Materials

Purpose

Policy 7.3 is intended to provide clear direction for the use and ordering of instructional materials and supplies that support the curricular outcomes of a course, while ensuring these materials meet the college's commitment to controlling costs that promote access to higher education, and providing equal access for all students as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA, Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act of 1973).

Decision

On December 3, 2024, the AGC membership voted to approve revisions to this policy as part of a scheduled review. Changes to the policy include:

- Use of the general version of the abbreviation for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) instead of ADAA throughout the document.
- Use of more concise and more inclusive language in Section III.A.1, Guiding Principle #1.
- Use of more concise language and inclusion of equity lens in III.B.2 Policy Parameter #2.
- Edit of III.B.6 Policy Parameter #6 to identify variation from the policy as the responsibility of the Department Head/Program Director.

The revised policy statement for 7.3 Instructional Materials reads as follows:

III. Policy Statement

A. Guiding Principles

1. Cost is one of the most significant barriers to higher education. Without compromising academic standards or academic freedom, lower-cost instructional materials are a better choice than more expensive instructional materials.
2. Fewer departmental or program options for instructional materials promotes curricular consistency. This is particularly important in environments that employ larger numbers of adjunct faculty.
3. A smaller number of instructional materials options stabilizes the resale market for used instructional materials and helps keep student materials costs low.
4. All materials selected for a course must provide for equal access as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended

(ADA, Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act of 1973). This requirement for accessibility applies to websites and all other adjunctive resources identified for use in the course.

5. An apparent conflict of interest may occur when instructional materials produced by a faculty member are required or recommended for a course taught by that faculty member, and where the sale of such materials produces financial gain for the faculty member. In such a circumstance, the faculty member and the department must address this issue directly.

B. Policy Parameters

1. Every course shall have an identified set of instructional materials that support the course curriculum.
2. Instructional materials that must be purchased by students shall be adopted for no less than two consecutive years. Specific exceptions to this are:
 - a. if a department/program selects freely licensed materials ("Open Educational Resources - OER") that provide access to the instructional materials at no or low-cost to the students in the course. Because of the significant financial benefit to students in the course, traditional commercial materials may be replaced with OER materials if the department/program chooses to do so prior to the conclusion of the two-year adoption period.
 - b. if curriculum in an area changes significantly such that adherence to the established time-period would render course content out-of-date with contemporary standards.
 - c. if an instructor identifies instructional materials that better expand the diversity of perspectives included and/or support the equity and inclusion goals in their existing curriculum.
3. All instructional materials identified as required or recommended, including OERs, will be adopted through the process established by the respective department/discipline and ordered by the Department Head/Program Director or their designee. This selection will conform to the calendar established for instructional materials selection. If instructional materials options considered by the department have been authored by a member of the department, that member should recuse themselves from the selection decision to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest in this selection. (If instructional materials authored by a member of the department are selected for use, the member and department should address this conflict in the manner identified in the *Procedures* section below.) Differences of opinion

among faculty members regarding instructional materials choices will be resolved through the process established by the department/program.

4. Instructional materials, which are adopted by the department/discipline, shall be used by all faculty teaching that course. If the department/discipline approves multiple materials options, anyone teaching the course must use one of the identified options. If a material is identified as *required* for a course, it must be used substantively in the course (i.e., students must only be required to purchase materials that are used substantively in the course - for assigned readings, homework, activities, etc.).
5. Instructional materials selection decisions will include the following three primary considerations: 1) quality of content to meet course learning outcomes, 2) cost to students, and 3) equal access as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA, Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act of 1973). Because of the significant importance given to promoting access to higher education by controlling student educational costs, departments or programs will consider free/low-cost textbooks that meet qualitative requirements. If more than one textbook meets the quality and accessibility criteria above, preference will be given to a free/low-cost textbook. If more than one textbook meets the quality, cost, and accessibility criteria above, preference will be given to those that are available in multiple formats (e.g. electronic, print, e-book).
6. Variation from this policy and unusual materials selection circumstances can be confirmed with or resolved by the Department Head/Program Director and, if necessary, with the mediation of appropriate Dean or Associate Dean. Those variations shall be aligned with the Guiding Principles laid out in III.A.
7. Departments that order materials that are electronic or are bundled with electronic media containing courseware or software applications must acquire a sufficient number of licenses for the College to use in its computer labs and classrooms.
8. Departments that order printed instructional materials should make every effort to ensure print copies are available in the Library reserve collection and relevant tutorial labs on campus.

Sponsor/Champion of Proposed Policy

Co-Chairs: Sean Mackey (Assistant Professor, English) and Lauren Woolsey (Associate Professor, Physical Sciences)

Members: Jesse Crandall (Assistant Professor, Physical Sciences), Samantha Minnis (Information Literacy and Outreach Librarian), and Brent Spitler (Professor, Business)

Rationale/Supporting Data

The policy team had three goals for this review:

- Address confusion on policy flexibility in certain circumstances
- Review the policy with an equity lens
- Provide an opportunity for input from the wider GRCC community

The team reviewing this policy:

- Sought and included input from AGC members at three meetings.
- Received and responded to input from departments, programs, and individual faculty members.

Implications for Action

One of the “Related Documents” currently listed is GRCC Guidelines for Assuring Accessibility of Instructional Materials but no file or website is linked. The team recommends updating this listing to either the [2019 document](#) or to the current [GRCC website for accessibility](#). The team also recommends adding a fourth consideration for the selection of materials, “Equitable and inclusive frameworks,” to Section X.A.

Date of Decision by AGC

Date Passed: December 3, 2024

49 (89%) approved, 5 (9%) not approved, 1 (2%) abstained

Section to be Completed by the Provost

Evaluation Plan

The Instructional Materials Policy will be evaluated according to the next scheduled review of the policy. This evaluation and review will include feedback from GRCC faculty members and College stakeholders as well as benchmarking from peer institutions.

Next scheduled review of policy: Academic Year 2027-28

Response from Provost

I received this AGC Decision Report on Thursday, June 12, 2025. I approve of the revised policy statement recommended by the AGC as outlined above. I am charging the Teaching, Learning, and Distance Education (TLDE) Office, led by the Executive Director of TLDE and with support from the OER

Coordinator, as appropriate, to coordinate and finalize the implementation of this policy revision. This will include updating the policy document, reviewing the procedures, and, if necessary, making updates to the procedures and related documents according to the implications for action outlined above. This will be followed by an update to the Academic and Student Affairs Council once the policy document has been reviewed and updated. Additional steps of implementation will include working with the Provost's Office to update the policy document on the appropriate GRCC webpage and a communication plan about the updated policy document. Full implementation of this revised policy statement should be accomplished no later than the start of the Winter 2026 semester.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Shelia Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and "J".

June 21, 2025