

Online Preparedness Task Force

Faculty Readiness Working Group

Communication Document #1 – Textbooks

This document is intended to help the Task Force co-chairs to draft an email communication to faculty/staff and students around textbooks.

Many course instructors will have just received an email communication from the bookstore about placing their textbook orders for the Fall term. It would be good to follow this email up as soon as possible with the following reminders for course instructors:

- ⇒ Transitioning courses online will require course instructors to consider whether their preferred textbook (for those who are using textbooks) is available in digital format. We are encouraging course instructors to check with the publisher as soon as possible on this to determine availability and pricing (compare pricing to print options; in some cases the digital copy may be less expensive, but in some cases it may be more). If you opt to go with a digital version of the textbook, you will need to communicate this to the bookstore as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Some publishers have digital versions of their textbooks that can be integrated with Moodle (e.g., the textbook can be posted chapter-by-chapter to Moodle); if the instructor is intending to use Moodle, they may want to ask the publisher if this option is available. If it is, the instructor will also have to confirm with IT Services that Moodle integration is possible. Moodle integration will take IT Services some time so, again, the earlier these decisions are made, the better.
- ⇒ If considering a hardcopy version of the textbook only, you will need to consider whether the texts can be shipped to students, as well as how long it will take to ship (the pandemic has resulted in shipping backlogs). Consider also that international students might not be able to procure a hardcopy.
- ⇒ Where possible, consider providing students with the flexibility to use previous versions of the textbook (as it may be easier for students to purchase the book secondhand than ordering it from a supplier and waiting for it to ship; it also may be cost effective).
- ⇒ In general, course instructors are reminded to make their decisions around textbooks as soon as possible to ensure that students will have access to the textbooks when classes begin.

Communication pieces to raise with students (this will have to be done after registration):

- ⇒ Students are encouraged to remember that if they need to purchase a hardcopy of a textbook for a course, shipping times are longer than usual due to the pandemic. Students may want to check to see whether obtaining a digital copy is an option.

⇒ Additionally, students are encouraged to ensure that they are ordering the correct textbooks for their courses, as returns will be more challenging during this time period. If a student has doubts about what textbook they need, they are encouraged to ask their course instructor for the ISBN.