

# FAQs for TCC Faculty and Administrative Assistants about Courses with OER or Low Cost Textbooks

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has made it possible for students to search in the Class Schedule for courses using “**OER: No Textbook to Purchase**” or “**Low Cost Textbook**.”

This document attempts to provide directions and parameters to aid TCC faculty and departmental administrative assistants in designating courses with “**OER: No Textbook to Purchase**” or “**Low Cost Textbook**” attributes in the ctcLink Class Schedule.

## FAQs in this document:

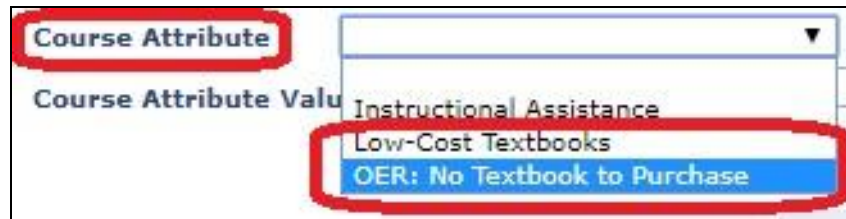
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## What does “Open Educational Resources” or “OER” mean?

“Open Educational Resources” -- often referred to as “OER” -- describe any type of educational materials that are in the public domain or have an open license. This means that these materials can be legally and freely copied, used, adapted and re-shared in the classroom. There are different kinds of open licenses, including “[Creative Commons licenses](#)” or “CC licenses.”

What does this mean for you when designating courses as OER courses? It means, essentially, that there is **no textbook for students to purchase**.

This also explains why the course attribute value in ctcLink is labeled “**OER: No Textbook to Purchase**.”



### Does “OER” mean “digital”?

Not necessarily. OER can be digital, in print, or a combination of both. For example, a CC-licensed e-book that is available for free online or download *would* qualify as OER, whereas an all-rights-reserved e-book that charges a one-time or rental fee *would not* qualify as OER.

### What if my course has NO textbook at all?

For courses with no textbook, you would label your course with the “OER: No Textbook to Purchase” course attribution, as there is still no textbook to purchase.

### What does an “OER: No Textbook to Purchase” course designation NOT include?

If you have no textbook for your course but *have* opted for alternatives like online homework platforms and codes or fee-based publisher-provided curricular materials, then this would NOT qualify for the “OER: No Textbook to Purchase” attribute.

If those fees fall below the “Low Cost Textbook” \$50 threshold -- as explained below in more detail -- then the course may be designated with the “Low Cost Textbook” attribute.

### What does the “Low Cost Textbook” designation mean?

This means these courses have a \$50 cost cap or threshold for materials used in those courses, in an effort to make those courses and materials more affordable for students.

**Beginning in Winter 2019, the cap for “Low Cost Course Materials” at TCC will be at or below \$50, the official cap set by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges.**

**Note:** The \$50 cost cap is *pre-tax*, so you do not have to factor in tax costs.

### What does “Low Cost Textbooks” include?

**Included** in the \$50 cost cap:

- textbooks and other text-based materials
- workbooks
- lab manuals

- online homework platforms
- codes for publisher-provided curricular materials.

### What does “Low Cost Course Materials” NOT include?

**Excluded** from the \$50 cost cap:

- art supplies
- calculators
- class fees
- equipment

### What price is used as the basis for textbook pricing?

The \$50 threshold is based on the pre-tax retail price and is applied to all class sections regardless of number of credits offered.

**As per SBCTC guidelines**, the threshold is based on the price at the campus bookstore or charged by the publisher directly, whichever is lower.

Prices offered by other third-party vendors such as Amazon.com are not to be considered due to price fluctuation and uncertainty of stock availability.

### What about optional costs?

Optional costs should NOT be included your calculation.

**For example:** You provide students with a link to a free, online version of your materials but give them the *option* to purchase materials in print. The cost of optional print materials should NOT be included in your calculation, and the course can be listed as an “OER: No Textbook to Purchase” course. However, if you have *required* your students to buy the print version of an open textbook, you should include that cost in your calculation; if the print version costs less than the “low cost” \$50 cap, then that course can be listed as a “Low Cost Textbook” course.

### What about textbooks used in a sequence of courses?

If a text is used across multiple courses in a sequence, DO NOT base your calculation on the cost divided by those courses.

**As per SBCTC guidelines**, prorating the book cost based on the number of credits or number of sections used is not allowed.

**For example:** A text that costs \$120 that is required for 3 sequenced courses DOES NOT meet the \$50 or under label requirement, because:

- Not all students take all courses in a series
- Students may take courses over time and may have to pay for edition changes
- Students must pay the \$120 and cannot budget for 3 even payments

### Can I designate courses as having BOTH the “OER: No Textbook to Purchase” and “Low Cost Textbook” attributes?

**No, a course can only be designated as one or the other.** Separating the two also allows for the college to track statistics for courses using OER, as well as savings for students. These courses have to be actively designated (i.e. opt-in); all other courses will remain unmarked by default.

### How do I designate courses as having either the “OER: No Textbook to Purchase” or “Low Cost Textbook” attributes?

Faculty work with their deans, faculty chairs or leads, administrative assistant(s) and/or support staff for their division to set their course attributes for either having OER or low cost textbooks. The administrative assistant will go into ctcLink and add a course attribute that "labels" the course as either having “OER: No Textbook to Purchase” or “Low Cost Textbook” and assign a note to that effect so that students will see that the course is designated as such. Students will then see those courses when they choose the “OER: No Textbook to Purchase” or “Low Cost Textbook” attribute in the Class Schedule search.

See the screenshot below for how to designate course attributes in ctcLink:

For courses with **OER**:

Class Attributes				Personalize   Find   View All		First 3-4 of 4 Last
*Course Attribute		*Course Attribute Value				
SINT	Course Intent	ACADEMIC	Academic Course	+	-	
SOER	Open Educational Resources	OER	Open Educational Resources	+	-	

For courses with **Low Cost Course Materials**:

Class Attributes				Personalize   Find   View 2		First 1-6 of 6 Last
*Course Attribute		*Course Attribute Value				
LNCM	Learning Communities	LEARN COMM	Learning Communities	+	-	
SCCN	Common Course Number	COMMONCRS	Common Course Number	+	-	
SFND	Fund Source	1	Fully State Funded	+	-	
SINT	Course Intent	ACADEMIC	Academic Course	+	-	
LCCM	Low Cost Course Material	LCCM	Low Cost Course Material	+	-	

**Courses also need to include notes regarding the OER or low cost course materials, so that students will have more information about the textbook or course materials once they click on the course.**

For courses using OER, here is the standard wording for the note:

OER: There is not a textbook to purchase for this course. All of the open educational resources (OER) used in the course will be provided online or in print. Please check Canvas for further information from your instructor.

For courses using low cost course materials, here is the standard wording for the note:

Low cost: The course materials that you need to purchase for this course are \$50 or less. Included in the \$50 cost cap are: textbooks and other text-based materials, workbooks, lab manuals, online homework platforms and codes or publisher-provided curricular materials for students. Excluded from the \$50 cost cap are: art supplies, calculators, class fees, or equipment.

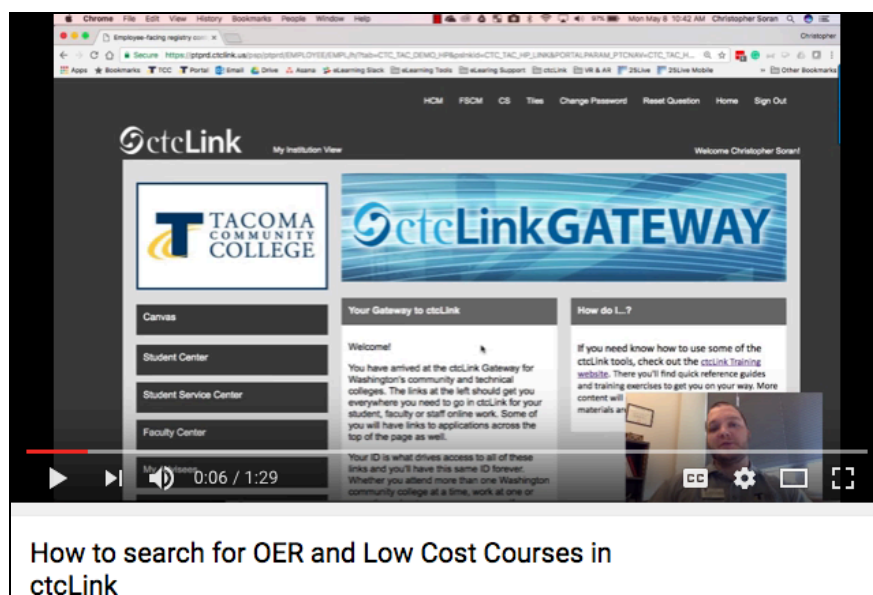
### **If I have chosen to use OER instead of a textbook, do I need to still submit textbook information to the bookstore?**

Yes, the TCC Bookstore still needs to know about all textbook information, even if that textbook or course materials is OER. This way, they can communicate this information to students. If you are using OER, please include that information -- even if it's just for a quarter -- in the Notes field in the TCC textbook system.

### **How can faculty search for or doublecheck courses or sections with “OER” or “Low Cost Course Materials”?**

Watch [this short Panopto video](#) that illustrates how to do this. (Please note that the video, created by Kristina Young, illustrates how to search for and find courses with the “Distinction Pathway” course attribute, but the steps are the same for searching for the “OER” or “Low Cost Course Materials” course attributes.)

Here is another short video, “[How to search for OER and Low Cost Courses in ctcLink](#),” created by Christopher Soran from eLearning, that illustrates how students search for courses with “OER” or “Low Cost Course Materials” attributes.

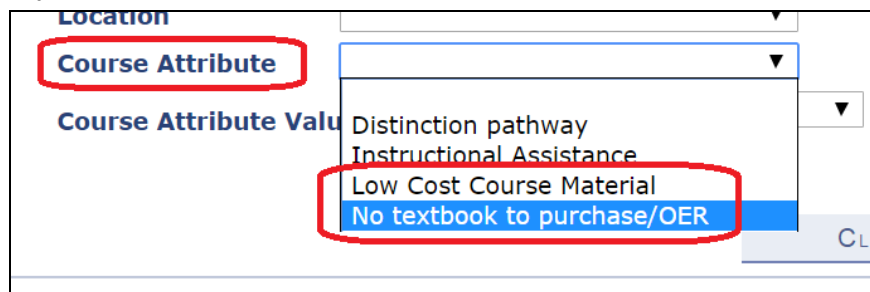


## How do students search for courses with “OER” or “Low Cost Course Materials”?

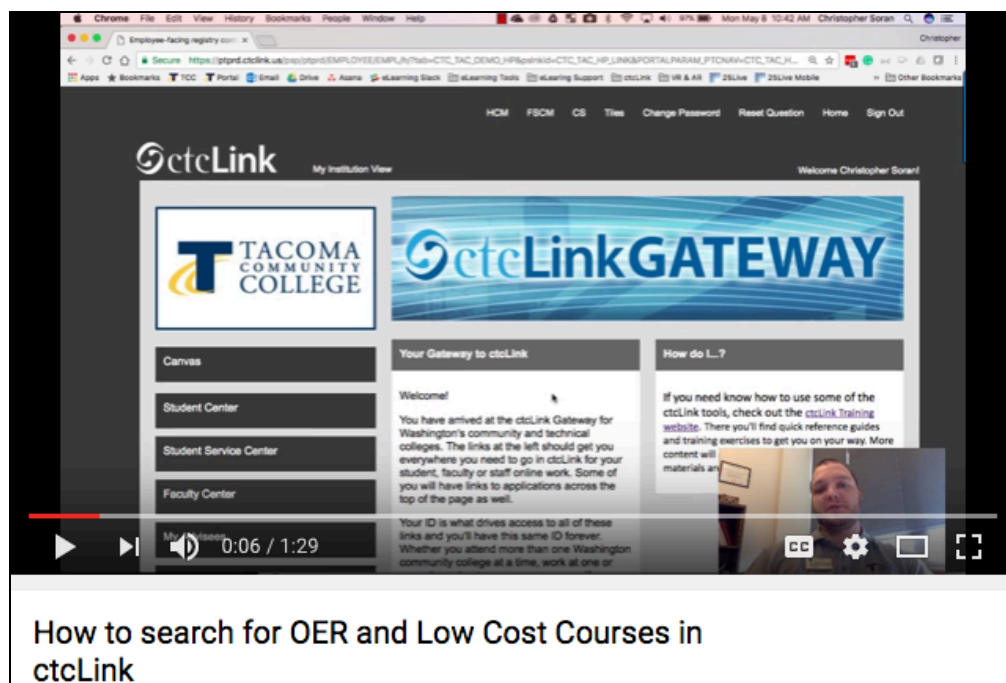
When you open the [Class Schedule search](#), scroll down to click on the “Additional Search Criteria” arrow



And then click on the drop-down menu for “Course Attributes,” as seen below, and select one of the options. You can only choose ONE of the options at a time.



Here is a short video, “[How to search for OER and Low Cost Courses in ctcLink](#),” created by Christopher Soran from eLearning, that illustrates how students search for courses with “OER” or “Low Cost Course Materials” attributes.



## Questions?

Contact the TCC OER Steering Group: [uer@tacomacc.edu](mailto:uer@tacomacc.edu)

## Other resources

- Faculty Guide to Open Educational Resources (OER), <http://tacomacc.libguides.com/uer>
- [SBCTC Low-Cost Code: Definition and Criteria](#)
- [SBCTC OER Code: Definition and Criteria](#)
- [SBCTC Student and Course Coding Manual](#)
- [ESSHB 1375](#) (House bill and [resulting law](#) “Providing students at community and technical colleges with the costs of required course materials”)