

Reporting Zero Textbook Cost Sections: Guidance For Faculty

[Jump to Guidance For Staff](#)

Why are we doing this?

So that students have additional information available to them about courses at the time of registration. In 2021 Student Government (Juneau campus) also passed Resolution 19-20-6 In Support of Textbook Affordability Efforts at UAS including Zero Textbook Cost course marking. The Zero Textbook Cost (SZTC) attribute will provide one more data point to inform their decision along with many other factors including; instructor, course schedule (day/time) and delivery mode. [The Textbook Cost Transparency Act \(SB 13\)](#) (effective July 1, 2026) will require marking courses that have Low Cost or Zero Cost textbooks.

For Faculty

- The intent is to integrate into existing processes (Course Offerings, PCO, Banner etc.)
- Faculty continue to report their textbook and course materials information during their department/campus Proposed Course Offering processes.
- Faculty will see a new column on PCO spreadsheets: Zero Textbook Cost (Y/N)
 - If your required course materials have zero total cost AND you want to have your course marked as a Zero Cost Textbook Section, mark "Y".
 - Otherwise you may choose to mark "N" or leave the column blank.
 - Participation is optional
 - When calculating total cost:
 - all *required* course materials for each course are considered
 - optional materials are disregarded.
 - course supplies and fees are disregarded.
 - Checkout these [sample scenarios](#) for guidance.

Who should faculty contact with questions?

- Begin with PCO admins
- Jonas Lamb, Egan Library, j.lamb@alaska.edu, 907-796-6440

Which course sections should be marked Zero Textbook Cost?

Any course section that has zero required textbook/course materials costs AND faculty elect to mark ZTC=Yes, should be marked Zero Textbook Cost.

Course materials are those resources used to convey course information or evaluate student performance, including (but not limited to): books/ebooks/textbooks, lab manuals, workbooks, online homework platforms or other publisher-provided tools and materials.

Zero Textbook Cost Section calculations only pertain to required course materials.

- *optional* course materials are not included.
- *Course supplies are not included* in calculating course materials costs. Course Supplies: calculators, art supplies, and lab safety equipment. Course supplies are frequently reusable and used repeatedly, such that once a student has these tools, they don't need to buy them again.
- *Course fees are not included* in calculating course materials costs except when assessed specifically for access to required course materials (i.e. Inclusive Access).

"Reporting Zero Textbook Cost Sections: Guidance For Faculty" by [Jonas Lamb](#), [University of Alaska Southeast](#) is in the [Public Domain, CC0](#)

Recall that required course materials are those that are essential for success in the course while optional materials may be helpful but are not necessary.

Print Copy Optional: When a textbook or other course materials can be accessed online for free and also have a print format available for purchase, the free option should be shared with students via syllabi or Blackboard announcement while the print option should be listed as optional in MBS. This way students can choose the format that works best for them.

These [sample scenarios](#) that may help you navigate your particular situation.

More [information for faculty](#) (Egan Library, Open Educational Resources Guide)

If you are unsure whether your course section should be marked Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC), contact Jonas Lamb (j.lamb@alaska.edu) for guidance.

How will UAS students view or use this info?

Messaging to students will specify that Zero Textbook Cost Section calculations only account for textbook and course materials costs. These sections may still have costs for course supplies, course fees, lab fees, proctoring fees, and tuition.

- “UAS Zero Textbook Cost Sections” will be available as a searchable attribute (in addition to UAF: NoLo and UAA ZTC Sections) in various Banner based systems used by students at registration:
 - Schedule Planner (UAOnline)
 - [UAS Class Search](#)
- Marked courses will be identifiable in Banner, extracted and embedded/presented on the Open UAS or other website as a list of “UAS Zero Textbook Cost Sections.”

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For Staff (PCO Admins, Course Schedulers)

- The Registrar's office has added a new column to Course Build Reports sent to PCO admins.
 - This column (AB on the Arts & Sciences build) is a dropdown (Y/N): Zero Textbook Cost Section (Y/N)
 - PCO admins update the instructions with additional guidance for faculty. Mark as Y if the course has no cost text for the student. This will place an attribute on the section for students to search. Faculty participation is *optional*. If this column/checkbox is left blank, assume N.
 - Zero Textbook Cost Section: Every course section that has zero total course materials cost AND faculty have elected to participate, should be marked Y.
 - PCO Admins add default comment to all Zero Textbook Cost Sections: "This section has Zero Textbook Costs or no textbook is required. See Blackboard for additional information."
 - Zero Textbook Cost Section with Print Copy Optional note: "Zero Textbook Cost Section: free digital materials, an OPTIONAL print copy is available."
 - PCO review process provides several opportunities for quality control prior to student registration.
 - PCO Admins OR Campus Bookstore designee add appropriate entry to MBS
 - "This section has Zero Textbook Costs. See Blackboard for additional information."
 - Zero Textbook Cost Section with Print Copy Optional note: "Zero Textbook Cost Section: free digital materials, an OPTIONAL print copy is available."
 - Registrar adds "UAS Zero Textbook Cost Section" Banner attribute (SZTC) to all ZTC sections.
 - Once Banner attribute is added to sections;
 - students can search for course sections marked "UAS Zero Textbook Cost Section" in Schedule Planner (UAOnline)
 - UAS Web and Info Systems is working to update the UAS Class Search tool to enable searching by "UAS Zero Textbook Cost Section" possibly with an abbreviation (ZTC) and a hover definition similar to how GER and ANKGR are displayed.

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Recall that required course materials are those that are essential for success in the course while optional materials may be helpful but are not necessary.

Print Copy Optional: When a textbook or other course materials can be accessed online for free and also has a print format available for purchase, the former should be listed as required in MBS and the latter should be listed as optional.

These [sample scenarios](#) that may help navigate a particular situation.

If you are unsure whether a course section should be marked Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC), please ask the faculty member first and then contact Jonas Lamb (j.lamb@alaska.edu) if additional guidance is needed.

If you notice a course section that is marked as ZTC but appears that it should not be (lists required textbook or homework platform costs in section notes), please contact Jonas Lamb.