

**FAQs for Faculty**  
**Textbook and Course Materials Policies and Procedures** 10/2012

**1. Why do I have to order the textbooks for my Fall classes in the middle of the Spring semester? That's way too early (five months before Fall classes start)!!**

**A.** Two reasons: First, we must comply with federal law [P.L.11.315 Higher Education Authority Act (HEOA)], which requires that instructors report ISBN numbers of textbooks and identify other course materials – both required and supplemental – to be used in each course listed in the Class Schedule Guide by the time students register for the course. The adoption reporting deadlines (March 15 for Fall/Summer and October 15 for Spring) are based on when our students start registering for the upcoming semester. The intent of HEAO is to reduce textbook costs by giving students enough time to comparison shop for potentially lower cost options.

Second, the “early” adoption date for Fall enables the university-affiliated bookstore (Barnes and Noble) to give students back as much money as possible during the May buy-back, which is their primary source for used books. The bookstore also starts ordering the books that they don't think they will gain from the buy-back in Spring from the used book companies. The used book market is very competitive, so they need to source textbook adoptions as early as possible to provide our students with more used books, which are cost less than new books. *(6.0 Textbook Adoption Deadlines)*

**2. Do I report information only about the required textbooks to the Department/School Textbook Liaison?**

**A.** No. Instructors must report ISBN numbers of textbooks and identify other course materials – both required and supplemental – to be used in each course by the time students register for the course. *(6.0 Textbook Adoption Deadlines; 7.0 Procedural Guidelines)*

**3. To whom do I report my textbook and course materials information? How do I order my course materials?**

**A.** Instructors **may not** place orders for their textbooks/course materials directly with the university-affiliated bookstore (Barnes and Noble). Instructors **report** all textbook and course materials to the department/school textbook liaison assigned for entering this information into SOAR. All textbooks and course materials are **ordered** by the university-affiliated bookstore, based on the entries in SOAR. The bookstore discloses textbook/course material information on their website, as required by federal law. Students may purchase textbooks/course materials from any source they choose. *(7.0 Procedural Guidelines; 17.0 Student Textbook and Course Materials Purchases)*

**4. I found a great source for the book /e-book that I want my students to use for my course. Is that ok to tell my students to buy it there?**

**A.** Instructors may not **require** students to purchase textbooks/course materials from a specific source, but they can inform students about alternate sources. Students access information about the textbook/course materials on the university-affiliated bookstore website, but they may purchase textbooks/course materials from any source they choose. *(7.0 Procedural Guidelines; 17.0 Student Textbook and Course Materials Purchases)*

**5. Is it necessary to report textbook and/or course materials for a course or section without an assigned instructor? What if my department has not hired an instructor prior to the adoption deadline?**

A. Unit leaders must report all textbooks and course materials – both required and supplemental – through the university-affiliated bookstore (Barnes and Noble) by the adoption deadline (March 15 for Fall/Summer and October 15 for Spring). This includes courses and sections without an identified instructor.

If the new instructor wants to use textbooks/course materials other than those reported by the adoption deadline, then an exception request must be made, but no later than 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester in question. *(7.2 Procedural Guidelines; 10.0 Multiple Sections and Exception Deadlines)*

**6. All my course materials are available at no cost to students. Why do I have to report anything to the textbook liaison in my department?**

A. We have to submit an annual report to IHL that includes the number of courses that did not comply with HEOA by the course adoption deadlines (March 15 for Fall/Summer and October 15 for Spring). There has to be some information reported in SOAR for each course offered at Southern Miss, or it may appear that instructor did not submit the required information on time. Therefore, a “No Course Material Required for Class” statement must be entered into SOAR for all courses for which students do not have to purchase any textbook/course materials. *(8.0 Course Type)*

**7. My class is an independent study class and does not require a textbook or any other course materials. Do I still have to report textbook data?**

A. Yes. Every course offered at Southern Miss, regardless of method of delivery or location of the class, must have textbook/course materials information reported to IHL. If no course materials are required for a course or section, then “No Course Materials Required for Class” must be reported. *(8.0 Course Type)*

**8. I teach one section of a course that has many other sections. Why are we supposed to use the same textbook in each section?**

A. Both federal law HEOA and IHL Textbook Policy strongly encourage departments/schools that teach multiple sections of the same course in any semester to select common required textbooks/course materials for all students within the various sections. This benefits students who may wish to change their schedule from one section to another, since they would not have to buy different textbooks/course materials. Students may or may not be able to get a refund for the unused course materials, depending on where they purchased them.

However, requests for an exception from the selection of common required textbooks/course materials for multiple sections can be made. Such requests must be approved by the chair/director, dean, and Provost prior to the final textbook adoption deadline for the semester in question (March 15 for Fall/Summer and October 15 for Spring). *(10.0 Multiple Sections and Exception Deadlines)*

**9. May I require my students to purchase textbooks or other course materials that are different from those I reported by the adoption deadline?**

**A.** Instructors **may not** require students to purchase textbooks or other course materials that are different from those they reported by the adoption deadlines (March 15 for Fall/Summer and October 15 for Spring) *without first seeking and being granted an exception.*

After reporting the textbook and course material adoptions by the deadline, an instructor who wishes to make any change in textbooks/course materials (substituting, adding, deleting) thereafter must request an exception no later than 30 calendar days prior to the start of the semester in question. Reasonable exceptions may include instances when textbooks/course materials are unavailable, when substantive changes are made in either the course description or the textbook/course materials, or when there is a significant change in the body of knowledge pertinent to the course.

*(10.0 Multiple Sections and Exception Deadlines)*

### **10. What might qualify for an exception to the adoption reporting deadline policy (March 15 for Fall/Summer and October 15 for Spring)?**

**A.** Southern Miss is committed to reducing the cost of our students' textbooks/course materials, for example by giving students enough time to comparison shop. Instructors should carefully consider what they will report as their required and supplemental textbook/course materials prior to the adoption deadlines. Exceptions may not be granted after the adoption reporting deadline just because an instructor failed to do some research about the availability of revised editions or different textbooks/course materials.

Reasonable exceptions for changes after the adoption deadline may include instances when textbooks/course materials are unavailable, when substantive changes are made in either the course description or the textbook/course materials, or when there is a significant change in the body of knowledge pertinent to the course.

If an instructor is hired after the adoption reporting deadline and wants to use textbooks/course materials other than those reported by the adoption deadline, then an exception request must be made.

All exception requests made after the adoption reporting deadline must be made and granted no later than 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester in question.

*(10.0 Multiple Sections and Exception Deadlines)*

### **11. If I receive an exception after the adoption reporting deadline that requires my students to purchase a different textbook or other course materials, what are my responsibilities?**

**A.** If an exception is approved after the deadline for reporting textbook adoptions (but no later than 30 calendar days before the start of a semester), the department/school must provide evidence that it contacted all enrolled students via email within 3 working days informing them about the change in course materials. The department/school must also contact ODA about the change if any students enrolled in the course had requested assistance with the original requested adoption in order to have full access to the course materials by the beginning of the semester. The department/school must offer assistance to students who already purchased the unneeded course materials at the university-affiliate bookstore by telling them the Barnes and Noble return policy.

*(10.0 Multiple Sections and Exception Deadlines)*

**12. What is the Barnes and Noble return policy?**

A. A full refund will be given in the original form of payment if textbooks are returned within the first week of classes (seven days) with original receipt and if the book is in the original condition in which it was purchased.

Students who drop a class have thirty days from the first day of class to receive a full refund; they must have the original receipt and proof of drop.

<http://usm.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBRefundsView?langId=-1&storeId=13556&catalogId=10001>

**13. What is the process for reporting textbooks and course materials if a new course or an additional section is added after the adoption deadline?**

A. Textbooks/course materials for **courses** added after the adoption reporting deadline (March 15 for Fall/Summer and October 15 for Spring) are reported in SOAR, sent to the university-affiliated bookstore (Barnes and Noble), and reported to the Provost's Office after the Registrar's Office processes the Change of Schedule form. If a new **section** is added to a course after the adoption deadline and uses the same textbook/course materials as the other sections, no further action is required. However, if the new section would use textbooks/course materials different from those adopted for the other sections of the course, an exception must be requested. *(6.0 Textbook Adoption Deadlines; 10.0 Multiple Sections and Exception Deadlines)*

**14. Where can I find the Textbook Exception Request form?**

A. The Textbook Exception Request form is available on the Provost's Office website:

<http://www.usm.edu/provost/textbook-information>  
*(10.0 Multiple Sections and Exception Deadlines)*

**15. I found a textbook I like better than the one we started using in my lower division course this year. Will I need to use the current book for three years before we can start using the other textbook?**

A. Both federal law HEOA and IHL textbook policy have guidelines for a minimum three-year adoption period for lower level courses, but both permit reasonable exceptions. The three-year minimum adoption benefits students because there are more used – and therefore more lower cost – textbooks/course materials available for a longer period of time. An exception to the minimum three-year adoption must be approved by the chair/director, dean, and Provost prior to the final textbook adoption deadline for the semester in question (March 15 for Fall/Summer and October 15 for Spring). *(11.0 Minimum Adoption Period)*

**16. What are my responsibilities as an instructor with respect to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act (1990)?**

A. Southern Miss is committed to providing equal access for persons with disabilities. All textbooks/course materials must be accessible, including software programs, Web pages, multimedia (videos and audio files), and any other required or supplemental materials used in

courses. Growing reliance on the internet, multimedia, and other information technologies can create difficulties for persons with disabilities, many of whom may access traditional information sources in alternative manners. For example, some with visual impairments may use screen readers or audio tracks to access print media. Persons with hearing impairments may depend on closed captioning to follow dialogues in movies or presentations. Others may have difficulty using a mouse or submitting responses in a timely manner. With the variety of media frequently used in today's classes, considerations must be given to access for persons with disabilities.

For more information, visit [www.usm.edu/oda](http://www.usm.edu/oda). If you have questions, please contact the Office for Disability Accommodations at 601.266.5024. Persons with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the *Mississippi Relay Service* at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or email Scott Dossett at [Scott.Dossett@usm.edu](mailto:Scott.Dossett@usm.edu).