

Textbook Provision of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)

WHAT IS THE HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT?

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) contains numerous provisions with which US institutions of higher education must comply in order to be eligible for Title IV funding (student financial aid). This act has several provisions with which the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point must comply. You can read more fully about HEOA at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>.

WHAT IS THE HEOA'S TEXTBOOK PROVISION?

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point must ensure its compliance with the HEOA textbook provision. Section 133 of the HEOA states the following:

SEC. 133. TEXTBOOK INFORMATION

(a) PURPOSE AND INTENT –

The purpose of this section is to ensure that students have access to affordable course materials by decreasing costs to students and enhancing transparency and disclosure with respect to the selection, purchase, sale, and use of course materials. It is the intent of this section to encourage all involved parties, including faculty, students, administrators, institutions of higher education, bookstores, distributors, and publishers, to work together to identify ways to decrease the cost of college textbooks and supplemental materials for students while supporting the academic freedom of faculty members to select high quality course materials for students.

The portion of Section 133 that most affects college faculty is the following:

(d) PROVISION OF ISBN COLLEGE TEXTBOOK INFORMATION IN COURSE SCHEDULES -

To the maximum extent practicable, each institution of higher education receiving Federal financial assistance shall -

(1) disclose, on the institution's Internet course schedule and in a manner of the institution's choosing, the International Standard Book Number and retail price information of required and recommended college textbooks and supplemental materials for each course listed in the institution's course schedule used for preregistration and registration purposes, except that –

(A) if the International Standard Book Number is not available for such college textbook or supplemental material, then the institution shall include in the Internet course schedule the author, title, publisher, and copyright date for such college textbook or supplemental material; and

(B) if the institution determines that the disclosure of the information described in this subsection is not practicable for a college textbook or supplemental

material, then the institution shall so indicate by placing the designation 'To Be Determined' in lieu of the information required under this subsection; and

- (2) if applicable, include on the institution's written course schedule a notice that textbook information is available on the institution's Internet course schedule, and the Internet address for such schedule.

In other words, by the time registration opens for students, they should be able to view not only the courses available but the textbooks (or other supplemental materials) that will be required for the course. You can read the full list of provisions at <http://content.efollett.com/HEOA/library/HEOATextbookProvision.pdf>.

WHAT PROCESS HAS UWSP DEVELOPED TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PROVISION?

1. All faculty must provide textbook information for the classes they are scheduled to teach **by March 1st for the Summer/Fall term and October 1 for Winterim/Spring terms.**
2. Departments and faculty will enter textbook and material information through the WINPRISM site.
3. For courses where no current faculty member is listed, the department head should list "TBA" but still list the course textbooks that will be used.

Frequently asked questions about HEOA's Textbook Information Provision

Question 1: What's the Intention of the HEOA requirements?

The intention of textbook information requirements is:

- To ensure that students have access to affordable course materials by decreasing costs to students and enhancing transparency and disclosure with respect to the selection, purchase, sale, and use of course materials." (See PURPOSE AND INTENT of Section 133 for more details).
- To encourage all involved parties...to work together to identify ways to decrease the cost of college textbooks and supplemental materials for students while supporting the academic freedom of faculty members to select high quality course materials for students."

Question 2: Will these requirements interfere with academic freedom?

The law contains a RULE OF CONSTRUCTION: "Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede the institutional autonomy or academic freedom of the instructors involved in the selection of college textbooks, supplemental materials, and other classroom materials."

Question 3: What are the essential requirements that campuses must satisfy?

"To the maximum extent practicable, each institution of higher education receiving Federal financial assistance shall—"Disclose, on the institution's internet course schedule and in a manner of the institution's choosing, the ISBN (International Standard Book Number) and retail price information of required and recommended college textbooks and supplemental materials for each course listed in the institution's course schedule used for preregistration and registration purposes."

Question 4: Are there additional recommendations that campuses need to satisfy?

"An institution... is encouraged to disseminate to its students information regarding:

- Availability of institutional programs for renting textbooks or purchasing used textbooks
- Availability of institutional textbook buy-back programs
- Availability of alternative content delivery programs; or
- Other available institutional cost-savings strategies"

You can provide students direct communications and through student organizations links to your campus bookstore programs.

Question 5: What happens if a campus does not comply with these requirements and recommendations?

Complying with the HEOA requirements is a condition for the institution receiving student financial aid from the Federal government. Non-compliance could put at risk money in Federal student assistance for our UWSP students.

Question 6: What do we do when we do not know what materials are assigned for the course?

"if the institution determines that the disclosure of the information described in this subsection is not practicable for a college textbook or supplemental material, then the institution shall so indicate by placing the designation "To Be Determined" in lieu of the information required under this subsection;"

There are many challenges to providing the textbook information in a timely and accurate manner. Classes are cancelled or added, faculty assignments to classes change sometimes at the last minute. Continuously improving the percentage of courses with textbook information over time is what we can reasonably do.

Question 7: Who is responsible for implementing-maintaining HEOA requirements on my campus?

Collaboration across a wide range of units on your campus will be key to your campus' successful compliance to HEOA requirements and fulfilling the intent on the law. Each campus has established processes that include key campus personnel that ensure the campus is meeting HEOA requirements.

Question 8: What can we do to increase the timeliness of faculty submitting textbook and supplemental information?

Communicate to Faculty the Importance of providing textbook and course materials in a timely manner -

- Emphasize that submitting textbook information by the campus due date enables the campus to provide the information to our students required by HEOA.
- Messaging that faculty are helping to provide students more affordable options by providing course material requests to the campus bookstore by the campus due date.
- Submitting course material adoptions in a timely manner benefits students with disabilities and allows sufficient time to locate alternative formatted materials.
- Faculty submitting their text rental course material adoptions in on time AND choosing no-cost and low-cost quality supplemental course materials can provide significant support for the academic success of all UWSP students.
- Students are more likely to come to class the first day with their course materials.

Communicating why and how to provide the textbook and course materials information is important to meeting the requirements of HEOA. To help you explain why it is so important to provide textbook information and to provide the tools to make it easy, here are some suggestions for useful themes that Academic Affairs leaders can use when communicating with faculty members:

- **Textbooks and Financial Aid: What's the Connection?** – Faculty may not know that their campus' ability to provide Federal financial aid to their students is dependent upon a wide range of requirements, including the availability of textbook information within the course schedule. Raising awareness of this requirement can help faculty understand why they are being asked to submit their book requests so early and can help motivate more timely communication of the required textbook and supplemental material information.
- **Choosing Affordable Course Materials:** The textbook information requirements in the HEOA are driven by the goal of making higher education more affordable for students. Blending the HEOA requirements into a broader affordable supplemental course materials campaign can provide a converging purpose for faculty communicating their textbook course materials information in a timely manner.
- **Affordability and Student Success:** Students are not buying all the course materials they need to succeed because they cannot afford them. Another motivating message can be, "Help provide students more affordable options by getting course materials requests to the bookstore on time so they can find the most affordable option for materials."