



Statement on Textbooks

VCU Libraries is aware of and sensitive to the fact that the high cost of assigned course textbooks often puts these materials out of reach for many VCU students. A recurring request of the Libraries is to purchase an electronic copy of an assigned textbook to defray these costs for students. Budget limitations prevent the Libraries from purchasing textbooks. Regardless of cost, most of the major textbook publishers do not allow libraries to purchase electronic versions of their textbooks, especially those with multi-user licenses which are ideal for the online classroom environment. Following is a list of publishers who do not provide purchasing options for electronic textbooks for libraries:

Cengage
Elsevier imprints (often health sciences)
Pearson McGraw Hill
Oxford University Press
Thieme
Most publishers of popular fiction and popular nonfiction

Despite these limitations, VCU Libraries is working with faculty wishing to reduce textbook costs in their courses by:

- Providing access to and/or purchasing ebooks with unlimited user licenses which are used as course content. These ebooks are considered scholarly works rather than textbooks and thus can be acquired by the library. However, some scholarly works still remain unavailable for purchase or purchase with unlimited users by libraries. [Learn more about using library ebooks as course materials.](#)
- In conjunction with the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA), offering the [VIVA Faculty Ebook Portal](#). All books in the Portal have unlimited user licenses. Faculty can preview books and, if it's a good fit, request for purchase through VIVA.
- Assisting with finding, customizing, or creating Open Educational Resources (OER). These resources are not only free to access, but also carry permissions for unrestricted usage, sharing and editing. [Learn more about Open Educational Resources.](#)
- Providing funding and project support for lowering textbook costs through our [Affordable Course Content Awards](#) and [VIVA Open Grants](#).

For more information about VCU Libraries' support for open and affordable course content, visit go.vcu.edu/textbooksavings.