



MINNESOTA STATE

Zero-Cost Course Resources Definitions

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Academic and Student Affairs

## Zero-Cost Course Resources

### Background

Course resource affordability efforts are occurring at all Minnesota State colleges and universities. In addition, Minnesota State legislatures propose bills based on their understanding and definitions of course resource affordability terminology. The goal is to define and use terminology that is consistent across Minnesota State.

### Audience

The audience for this information is primarily faculty and administrators working on system-wide and or local campus course resource affordability initiatives.

### Definitions

#### Z-degree

A complete associate or bachelor's degree program that exclusively uses course resources that are no cost to students such as open educational resources (OER), open textbooks, and library-curated materials. Students may still incur costs for fees in statute or policy mandated to be charged by all colleges and universities, campus discretionary fees established by the board and adopted by the college, personal property, service charges, or course activities having value outside of the classroom.

#### Course

A set of designed experiences with defined student learning outcomes.

{<https://www.minnstate.edu/board/procedure/336p1.html>}

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## Course Section

An individual course offering, distinguished from other course sections by date, time, location, instructor, delivery mode, set of student(s), etc.

## Z-degree Course Resources

A hard-copy or digital book, printed pages of instructional material, including consumable workbooks, lab manuals, subscriptions, online homework and quizzing platforms, and other required physical and digital content free of cost to students.

## Recommended v. Required Course Resources

**Required Resources:** These are required for a learner to achieve the student learning outcomes of the course.

**Recommended or Optional Course Resources** are not needed to achieve the minimal learning outcomes.

## Open Educational Resources (OER)

Teaching, learning and research resources that make use of appropriate tools, such as open licensing, to permit their free reuse, continuous improvement, and repurposing by others for educational purposes. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371129>

## Open Textbooks

Open textbooks are licensed by authors and publishers to be freely used and adapted. These textbooks can be downloaded, edited and distributed at no cost. <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/>

## Library-Curated Resources (free to students)

Diverse resources purchased by the library at no additional cost to the student for the supplementation and or replacement of course materials.

## Copyrighted Resources Used Under Claim of Fair Use (free to students)

An author may make limited use of the original author's work without asking permission. According to 17 U.S. Code § 107, certain uses of the copyrighted material are allowable in education for teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research, and is not an infringement of copyright. (The 'Fair Use' Rule: When Use of Copyrighted Material Is Acceptable | Nolo)

## Copyrighted Materials

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extend to any idea, procedure, process, system, title, principle, or discovery. Similarly, names, titles, short phrases, slogans, familiar symbols, mere variations of typographic ornamentation, lettering, coloring, and listings of contents or ingredients are not subject to copyright.

{<https://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/definitions.html>}

## Included in Course Resources Cost

- The course resource cost total is cumulative. If an instructor requires students to purchase any of the following resources for a course, the cost must be included when determining if a course qualifies as a Z-degree course resource
- The total is based on the lowest-priced option for each text or course resource. If a new hardcover text costs \$100, but there are used editions, rentals, or e-books available, the lowest price option is used.
- To be considered for a Z-degree course resource, the instructor cannot require students to purchase any course resources (although optional or supplemental resources that cost a student can be recommended).

## Not Included in Course Material Cost

- required fees in statute or policy mandated to be charged by all colleges and universities.
- campus discretionary fees established by the board and adopted by the college.
- personal property, service charges or course activities having value outside of the classroom

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