

Best Practices - Textbook Adoption @ SCC

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Some departments and divisions at Sacramento City College have policies regarding textbook adoption. These official and unofficial policies take several main forms. For example, some departments have a form called “Application for Textbook Adoption,” which involves queries about the textbook or learning material that a faculty member wants approved for use in a class in the department. If the form receives the appropriate signatures, the textbook is then placed on an approved textbook list, which is often used for new faculty as an example of what they should use in their courses. There are variations of this among different departments and various levels of adherence to this type of textbook adoption policy. Some departments don’t use a textbook adoption form, nor do they use a system of approving each other’s course materials. These various policies are all in keeping with the union contract and district policies’ positions on academic freedom (see table of contents).

Many of these policies, forms, and practices haven’t been revised or updated in decades.

The adoption of OER (Open Educational Resources) sometimes faces obstacles due to the various textbook adoption policies in place at SCC. Occasionally, faculty encounter resistance when submitting OERs - and other online sources - as their learning materials of choice via a textbook adoption process.

The AERC (Affordable Educational Resources Committee) suggests the following strategies that departments can use to incorporate OER and free course materials adoption into existing department policies. We encourage departments and divisions to review textbook adoption approval processes in order to make them more flexible for faculty who would like to use OERs. The AERC also compiled an extensive list of other OER resources to aid in OER adoption.

OER Adoption Suggestions:

1. If the Division/Department has existing Textbook Adoption policies and/or procedures:

- Include on any forms or documents a section for the URL, or web address - of the OER.
- Include licensing information for the OER (so its legal use is clearly documented).
- Include a FAQ or link to information on OER adoption in general for those new to OERs.
- If a form is used, make it electronically accessible and consider allowing electronic signatures.
- It should be noted on any form or policy that any restrictions related to the length of adoption (e.g. “a minimum of X semesters”) do not apply to adoption of completely free online materials.
- Any instructions accompanying a form or process for textbook adoption should make reference to OER, and be revised periodically to include up-to-date information about relevant policies.

2. If the Division/Department does not have Textbook Adoption policies and/or procedures:

- Discuss and promote OER use in department meetings, with general OER FAQ.
- Direct questions about OER adoption to the AERC (or to OER/Textbook Affordability Coordinators, when they exist).
- If a department or division textbook adoption policy is developed in the future, make sure that it meets the standards listed in item 1, above.