



Memorandum

TO: Provosts and Chief Financial Officers of the University of Texas System
Academic Institutions

FROM: The Office of Academic Affairs, UT System

DATE: September 25th, 2020

RE: Inclusive Access Course Fees

The purpose of this memo is to announce a new effort that recognizes Inclusive Access course material charges as “course fees” and establishes an appropriate approval process. Inclusive Access is a model of providing students digital course materials in lieu of print textbooks at a reduced price through consolidated purchasing. Sometimes referred to as “day-one access,” Inclusive Access is a name given by commercial publishers to automatic billing programs where a time-limited subscription to digital learning materials is automatically charged to students on their tuition and fee bill as part of their enrollment in a course. This fee may cover a variety of materials, from digital textbooks to homework sets.

As the price of printed textbooks continue to rise, leading some students to forgo purchasing critical and necessary course materials altogether, some faculty have turned to this model as a way to reduce costs while ensuring equitable access.

In accordance with 34 CFR 668.164(c)(2), institutions can assess Inclusive Access course fees for discounted digital course materials and credit a student’s account with Title IV funds. In Texas, course fees are authorized by TEC 54.504, for which the UT Board of Regents delegated the authority to presidents, conditioned on prior review and approval by the Executive Vice Chancellor. Therefore, Inclusive Access course fees must be submitted to the UT System Office of Academic Affairs for Executive Vice Chancellor approval.

To facilitate the approval process for Inclusive Access course fees, Office of Academic Affairs staff developed the attached notification template. The template must be submitted each semester no later than one week after your institution’s deadline for faculty to submit textbook information to the bookstore in accordance with TEC 51.452. Unlike other course fee requests, you will not be required to submit detailed information regarding the intended use of fee revenue, since Inclusive Access course fees can only be used to pass on the direct costs of discounted course materials. Submission of the notification template is all that is required to establish approval by the Executive Vice Chancellor. This process is effective for courses being offered in spring 2021.

As you may know, the UT System Affordable Learning Accelerator Task Force has spent considerable time working to understand the prevalence of new types of digital resources like Inclusive Access in use by UT institutions. This work takes place in a context of enormous changes in the publishing industry, and commitments to expand the use of Open Educational

Resources and other low-cost options for students. The Task Force's final report will include recommendations to keep the affordability of learning resources—as well as transparency around tuition and fees—front and center on behalf of students across the System. Embedding Inclusive Access materials in course fees and documenting institutional practice as a part of required reporting, fulfills this commitment to students and adheres to federal and state statute. We appreciate your help in making these important changes to our process.

For further questions about this process, please contact Lydia Riley, Senior Policy Analyst, at lriley@utsystem.edu.