

INCLUSIVE ACCESS PRICING THROUGH OHIOLINK

A Primer for Member Institutions

With Ohio's college students in mind, OhioLINK has negotiated and secured price agreements with major textbook publishers to reduce the wholesale price of e-textbooks to colleges and retailers by up to 80% and courseware by up to 55%—totaling more than \$50 million in potential costs savings to students each year.

Does this cover all textbooks assigned in higher education in Ohio?

No. Only e-textbooks delivered in the inclusive access model on campuses, and only with participating publishers. Print textbooks, used textbooks, rentals, and individual purchases of e-books are not discounted under these agreements.

Who are the participating publishers?

At this time, McGraw-Hill Education, Pearson, Cengage and SAGE Publishing.

What is inclusive access?

Inclusive access, sometimes called the “first day” model, is a model where all students enrolled in a class get immediate access to e-textbooks on day one of the course (or before) via the Course Management System (CMS). Students are billed for those e-textbooks through the campus bursar.

What are the benefits to inclusive access?

All students have access to required materials on the first day of class, starting students on a level playing field with reading and assignments—which benefits the student, the class, and the instructor.

Students are billed through the bursar alongside tuition and do not need to wait for financial aid or scholarship money to arrive to buy their textbooks.

Inclusive access models alleviate the work of acquiring textbooks for students, especially students new to campus and uninformed about various strategies for acquiring textbooks inexpensively. This is especially true for first-generation college students. They spend 10% more but acquire 6% fewer textbooks and pay 17% more per textbook than non-first-generation students. (Source: “Students Are Spending Less on Textbooks, but That’s Not All Good,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*.)

If students drop a course within the institutional add/drop dates, the refund to the student is automatic and the reimbursement is from the institution for the entire cost of the course materials.

WHY THIS APPROACH?

OhioLINK is developing a model that is available to our 90 higher education institutions across the state. It addresses their various needs, including contractual obligations and institutional readiness for inclusive access, while protecting academic freedom. Our goal is to deliver savings to students as soon as possible.

Academic freedom

Course materials continue to be determined by faculty, departments, and existing campus-defined methods of assigning material. This model maintains academic freedom for faculty. By concentrating on the major textbook publishers with titles already assigned in Ohio courses, faculty can choose to deliver savings merely by switching to inclusive access for materials that they have determined best meet the needs of their students. There is absolutely no requirement that faculty switch to one of these publishers just because OhioLINK has negotiated a discount.

Statewide impact

Ninety non-profit institutions of higher education in Ohio are members of OhioLINK. Therefore, any deal negotiated by OhioLINK could benefit our more than 500,000 students across the state in both public and private institutions, ranging from two-year institutions to research universities.

Guaranteed lower price for existing agreements

If your institution has an existing inclusive access program that involves any of these publishers, pricing will automatically go to the lowest negotiated price. In the flat pricing models, if there are e-textbooks that are priced below the flat price, the national net lower price will apply. Any decision to switch to an inclusive access model is solely at the discretion of the instructor and institution – if the pricing for the student is not advantageous, institutions and instructors should not include the course in the inclusive access model.

Institutional accommodation for legal, technical, and governance concerns on individual campuses

Because inclusive access involves institutional integration through the Course Management System (CMS) and the bursar's office, this model can be implemented through an institution's existing bookstore or textbook providers without requiring them to switch providers. This model allows campuses to accommodate their local contexts and needs, and respects that institutions are currently at different stages of inclusive access implementation, from widely adopted to initial consideration.



**AFFORDABLE
LEARNING**

THROUGH **OhioLINK**

What is courseware? Is it included?

Courseware is computer-assisted learning software that may include interactive assignments, homework, and quizzes, with an e-textbook commonly part of the courseware package. It typically delivers learning analytics to instructors at both the class level and the individual student level. Unlike textbooks, courseware is always integrated into a particular semester's course and grading, and is not included in the "perpetual access" agreement that applies to e-textbooks. All participating publishers who provide courseware have included discounted pricing. Where e-textbooks are part of a courseware package, the e-textbook is also available as a standalone discounted inclusive access textbook. The decision to use courseware is always a faculty decision—there is absolutely no requirement to use courseware as any part of this agreement.

How long will students be able to keep their e-textbooks in this model?

Students receive perpetual or long-term access under this agreement. All publishers have agreed that e-textbooks acquired in this model will be available to students after their course ends. A student who transfers from one Ohio institution to another will keep access to textbooks acquired at their first institution, and for publisher platforms with a digital bookshelf, access will be granted via a student's username and password. Students can also download e-textbooks to their digital devices and store them locally.

Do students have to pay for materials in inclusive access courses if they already have a textbook or prefer print textbooks?

No. By federal law, students can "opt out" of inclusive access and obtain their textbooks in whichever way is most advantageous to them.

Which publishers are currently participating?

As of today, OhioLINK has agreements with McGraw-Hill Education, Pearson, Cengage and SAGE Publishing.

What is "net price?"

Net price is equivalent to a statewide wholesale price. It means "net to the publisher."

Why are there two different kinds of prices: flat price and average discount?

This is dependent on the publisher, the size of the catalog, and the way the publisher delivers pricing to its campus channels. Pearson, which negotiated an average discount, will disclose the actual discount for every title in its catalog, allowing instructors and campuses to determine whether the cost savings to students justify moving to the inclusive access model. As OhioLINK and campuses evaluate these agreements moving forward, we plan to establish which models and publishers deliver better price outcomes for students.

Will all textbook publishers eventually be included?

Currently, OhioLINK is concentrating on publishers with the largest market share actually assigned in Ohio classrooms and with publishers that provide many textbooks in lower division courses with high enrollment.

Is this allowed under Ohio law if it involves charging the student through the bursar?

HB 49 provisions allow for textbook fees on a student's tuition bill and explicitly permits billing for inclusive access models.



OhioLINK



Department of
Higher Education

If you have questions, or don't have an existing campus bookstore or provider for inclusive access, contact the publisher representatives directly:



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