



Teri Gallaway, Ph.D. Executive Director & Associate Commissioner for LOUIS



A Program of the
BOARD of REGENTS
State of Louisiana

Course Schedule Marking
FAQs and Recommendations
September 15, 2020

Contact

Emily Frank

Affordable Learning Program Administrator

emily.frank@laregents.edu

Course Schedule Marking FAQs and Recommendations

What is required?

As a result of Act 125/SB117, Louisiana’s postsecondary public colleges and universities are required to “use a conspicuous symbol, logo, or other distinguishing feature to highlight each course included in its course schedule that exclusively utilizes AER or OER course materials.”

Read the full legislation here:

<http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1143722>

By when must this requirement be implemented?

Beginning in Fall of 2020, each public postsecondary education institution shall implement the course schedule marking.

How must this be reported?

The Board of Regents has implemented a course marker field on each course within the SSPS Submissions. This is used to identify if the course is OER or AER (defined below).

The valid options will be:

O (OER)

A (AER)

N (Neither)

For Summer 2020 through Summer 2021: Institutions will need to submit O, A, N or leave it blank.

For Fall 2021 on: This will become a hard error and institutions will need to submit O, A, N. Blank will not be allowed.

How are OER and AER defined?

OER (Open Educational Resources) and AER (Affordable Educational Resources) are unique designations and are defined as:

OER: A resource that is in the public domain or has been released under an intellectual property license that permits the free use, adaptation, and redistribution of the resource by any person.

AER: A single or collection of required resources that may be offered at no or low cost to a student at a pre-sales tax cost that does not exceed an amount equal to four times the federal minimum wage.

What is an example of an AER course?

For an AER course, the total cost for course materials must not exceed four times the federal minimum wage. As of fall 2020, the federal minimum wage was \$7.25, so the maximum total cost for an AER designation for Fall 2020 courses was \$29. This total must include both required textbooks and other required instructional materials, such as workbooks, lab manuals, online homework platforms and access codes from publishers.

An example of an AER course would be one where the instructor requires each student to purchase a textbook. After publisher and bookstore markups but pre-tax, the total cost is less than \$29. If this instructor decides to require additional curricular materials, amounts must be included in the calculation.

What is an example of an OER course?

An OER course is completely free because it uses openly licensed resources. To receive this designation, the course must use openly licensed materials for all required curricular resources, including textbooks and other instructional materials, such as workbooks, lab manuals, and online homework platforms.

An example of an OER course would be one where the instructor provides a link to a free, online version of an openly licensed textbooks. The course does not use any other required curricular resources. The professor can recommend students purchase a print-on-demand version, but as long as the instructor does not require the students to use the print version, the cost of printing does not disqualify this course from receiving the OER designation.

What is included/excluded when calculating course material costs?

Included in the cost: textbooks and other instructional/curricular materials, such as workbooks, lab manuals, online homework platforms and codes, or publisher-provided materials for students.

Also included are any course fees for course materials, such as a textbook rental fee, inclusive access fee, Barnes & Noble College Booksellers' First Day fee, or Follett's ACCESS fee.

Excluded from the cost: supplies and equipment, including art supplies, lab tools, and calculators. Also excluded are course fees that are a lab fee, technology fee, or testing fee.

Should optional or recommended be included when calculating course material cost?

Costs for optional or recommended materials should not be included in the calculation.

For example: the instructor provides students with a link to a free, online version of materials but gives them the option to purchase materials in print. The cost of optional print materials should not be included in the calculation. However, if the print version is required in the class, it should be included in calculating the cost.

Is this limited to undergraduate courses?

No. All courses listed in the course schedule should be evaluated for marking.

If course materials are used in multiple courses in a sequence, can the cost be prorated across the courses?

No. If a text or course materials are used across multiple courses in a sequence, you should not calculate the cost per course by prorating or dividing by the number of courses.

For example, if the text costs \$60 is required for a sequence of 3 courses, these courses would not meet the AER designation.

If a course is more than/less than 3 credit hours, can the cost of the text or course materials be prorated across credit hours?

No. When determining the designation, the total costs should be considered regardless of the number of credit hours.

If a student is required to register for a lecture and lab course at once, how are costs calculated?

If a course has an integrated lab, meaning the lecture and lab are simultaneously registered into a single course, the combined cost for the required instructional materials from the lecture and lab must be considered when determining the total cost.

If students register separately for the lecture and lab, meaning they are not coded together under a single course, the instructional materials for the lecture and lab are totaled separately.

What if my course textbook is available as an e-book through my campus library?

If the required text is available as a free-to-students e-book through the institution's library, as long as the instructor do not require the printed text in the class, the course can qualify for the AER designation. The course would not qualify for the OER designation unless the resource is openly licensed. You are advised to work with your library to notify them of your use of library-licensed e-resources.

What if my course textbook is available on print reserves in the campus library?

Since print reserves usually provide a single copy of a text to students, this would not be sufficient access to qualify for the AER designation.

What if I'm using OER and AER?

If you are using a mix of both OER and AER, the course would be labeled as AER so long as it meets the requirements for that designation.

What if I'm using free materials that are not openly licensed?

While all OER is free, not all free (gratis) content is OER. Open Educational Resources or OER are resources that are in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits the free use, adaptation, and redistribution of the resource by any person.

Library resources are an example. They may be provided to students at no cost, but the library has invested in providing access. Such materials should be labeled as AER.

What prices should I use when calculating costs?

To calculate curricular material costs for these designations, use the cost of materials from the campus bookstore. While materials may be less expensive elsewhere, students receiving financial aid or other funding may be required to purchase through the campus bookstore. In cases where the instructor has made a deal with the publisher so that materials directly from the publisher are available at a discount to the class, this lower cost can be used.

What if materials are less expensive on Amazon or via other third-party vendors?

Prices offered by third-party vendors such as Amazon should not be considered when calculating costs due to price fluctuation and uncertainty of stock availability. The cost of materials from the campus bookstore or directly from the publisher should be used.

Can cost be calculated using the price of a rental, used copy, or older edition?

Used, rented, and older edition costs can be used to calculate the total cost if this format is deemed appropriate by the instructor and if students are able to consistently obtain a used, rented, or older edition through the bookstore. For this, there must be sufficient stock given the course enrollment. You are advised to work with your bookstore to determine if stock is available in this format.

What if the post-tax cost is more than the AER threshold?

The AER cost should be calculated using the pre-tax retail price. If the combined instructional materials meet the threshold requirement pre-tax, the course should receive the AER designation even if post-tax it exceeds the cost threshold.

What if my course does not require any texts or courses materials?

A course can receive the AER designation if no texts are required and/or students are not required to purchase any materials.

No text required courses: For example, if an Art course does not have costs for course materials, it could receive the AER designation. This is because art supplies, along with other required supplies and equipment, are excluded from the AER calculation.

Students not required to purchase materials: For example, if the course uses instructor-created materials, activities, slides, websites, library materials, etc., and therefore does not have any costs for curricular materials, it is included in the AER designation (or the OER designation if these materials are openly licensed).

What if I wrote my own materials but have yet to apply an open license to them?

If the instructor is using materials they developed but without an open license or public domain designation, the course should be labeled as OER if the materials are freely accessible to the students and the instructor plans to release the materials with an open license or public domain designation when ready. If there is not an intention to release materials with an open license, the course should be labeled as AER.

What if my class has a fee that results in students receiving the required course materials?

Course fees for course materials should be included in the cost calculations. Examples of such fees include a textbook rental fee, inclusive access fee, Barnes & Noble College Booksellers' First Day fee, or Follett's ACCESS fee. A course with this type of fee will qualify as an AER course if it meets the requirements upon including the fee in the total cost calculation.

Other types of course fees are excluded from the calculation, including as a lab fee, technology fee, or testing fee.

Can my campus opt out of this course labeling?

All public postsecondary institutions are required by law to comply with this course labeling based on known information at the time of registration or the point at which the information becomes available. If a course meets one of the two designations (OER or AER), it must be prominently designated as such in the institution's course schedule.

Can my campus use additional codes in the course registration system?

Yes. Per the Act 125/SB117, "Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to prohibit a postsecondary education institution from including other distinguishing features in its course schedule related to the cost of course materials." Schools can create and apply additional course markings.

Can my campus combine OER and AER into a single designation in the course catalog?

No. OER and AER must be unique designations within the course schedule with unique definitions, as defined in Act 125/SB117.

My course is a complicated case and these FAQs do not address how to label it.

Contact Emily Frank, Affordable Learning Program Administrator at LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network, at emily.frank@laregents.edu.

These FAQs are adapted from other course marking initiative FAQs:

["Implementation Guide of OER and Low-Cost Labeling Policies"](#) by Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

["Material Costs in the Schedule FAQ"](#) by PCC OER Steering Committee is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#)

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