

Textbook and Course Materials Information for Students

Illinois State University understands that the rising cost of textbooks has created financial challenges for some of our students. We continue to work with all members of our community to provide the best academic experience while understanding the need to thoughtfully consider student expenses related to textbooks and other course materials. In addition to working with our faculty, the following information is being shared with you to assist with your textbook and materials planning and decision-making.

Financial Aid Short-Term Loans

- Students who are waiting for their tuition refunds or for regular student loans may be able to qualify for a financial aid short-term loan. They should visit with a financial aid counselor to learn what options are available to them.

Textbook Financing through Local Bookstores

- Financing offered through local bookstores to assist with the purchase of textbooks should be used with caution as it typically carries with it a high interest rate.
- Students should consult with the Financial Aid Office about all of their options before utilizing high-interest rate bookstore financing.

Assistance from Faculty, Milner Library and other Campus Units

- Students should speak with their instructor if they have any questions or concerns about which textbooks are required and, if there are multiple books required, when they need to purchase the books. Some books may not be needed at the beginning of the semester and delaying the purchase of some books may assist students financially.
- Some instructors will put at least one copy of their required textbooks at the Reserve Desk in Milner Library. However, students need to be aware that they are not permitted to take the copy out of the Library.
- Students should seek assistance from a Librarian; there may be other options such as inter-library loan.
- Instructors may have multiple copies of the text in their office that they may be willing to loan to students for a short period of time.
- Some textbooks are available at the Julia N. Visor Academic Center, primarily for the courses they also provide tutoring for (General Education Program courses).
- The Dean of Students Office, and specifically the Dean on Duty, is available to assist students who are experiencing financial difficulties from a holistic perspective.

Where and When to Purchase/Rent Textbooks

- Students should use caution when renting or purchasing textbooks from websites they are not familiar with as some students have had bad experiences.
- Used textbooks can offer great savings; look for them first.
- Students should be advised to carefully review the list of books for their courses. Courses may have books that are required and/or some that are recommended. If a student has concerns regarding purchasing all of the books they should speak with their instructor to get more information before purchasing/renting the recommended books.

Renting vs. Purchasing

- Renting may not be a cheaper option, if a book is purchased used or new it may be possible to sell it back and recoup some of the initial cost.
- Both local bookstores offer book rental.
- Rental books may be up to 50% less than the cost of purchasing a new book however students need to review the rental agreement carefully as there may be high penalty fees for returning the book late or in 'less than good' condition.
- Students may highlight and take notes in rented books however caution must be used so the book is returned in good condition to avoid penalty fees.
- Students should consider purchasing textbooks that will be good resources for them throughout college and possibly longer, specifically textbooks for major courses.
- Students should inquire about both options to determine the option that will best meet their needs.

E-books vs. Regular Books

- E-books are not necessarily a cheaper option.
- Students should consider their personal reading/study preferences before purchasing an e-book.
- You can buy or rent e-books.
- Approximately 20% of textbooks are available as e-books and the number is growing.
- This may not be the best option for some courses/disciplines.
- eTextbooks are meant to be read on a MAC or PC via the e-Reader application (that is typically free to download with the purchase/rental of the e-book) and the e-book can be viewed on up to 2 computers. For more information about e-books visit the FAQ section on the University Barnes & Noble website: <http://ilstu.bncollege.com/eBooks/EBooksFAQ.html>
- Some e-books may come with e-study guides, at no extra charge. These study guides may also be available with the purchase of regular textbooks.
- Some e-books are available for a free ten-day trial (must have a credit card).

Additional Costs Associated with Courses

A materials charge is an optional fee charged to a student for consumable materials used in a course. Not all courses have a materials charge, courses with material charges are listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. Course material fees are included on a student's tuition bill.

Some courses will require students to purchase materials necessary to complete a required project. Since these materials will vary and students may have multiple options about what kind of materials to purchase (art supplies for example) these are not part of a 'course materials charge' as described above. Instructors will communicate specific information to their students during the course and students will need to purchase the materials to complete the project(s). Some majors such as Art, Nursing, and design-related majors, often have multiple courses that will require students to purchase materials for certain projects. If students have concerns they should contact the department/school and request more information.