

Approved by: Education Strategy Committee November 2009

University Guidance on Charging for Course Material

Guidance on Charging for Course Materials

In 2006 the Academic Committee was asked to provide more detailed guidance on the matter of charging for course materials across the University, in light of recent queries and discussions this guidance has been revisited.

In line with guidance from the Funding Council, the University's current policy remains that core learning materials should be provided to students free of charge.

As such, where materials are to be used by students during class time then these must be provided free of charge and for textual material this should be in printed form. This includes all 'interactive' material which students are required to complete or make notes on during the class (lecture/tutorial/seminars) e.g. workbooks, poems, language notes."

In respect of textual materials which are core to the class, but which do not have to be used to complete tasks in class, departments can choose to provide printed versions* of material for students to reduce the need for them to buy costly textbooks and a reasonable charge may be made to cover production costs only. Departments may not, however, require students to purchase such printed material. All such materials should, where possible, also be provided free of charge online and in good time for the session for which they are required. It would be good practice to provide such online materials at least one week before the relevant session to allow students time to access and print off materials locally as desired. Departments should advise students that such materials are not compulsory purchases and inform them that the information is available elsewhere (either online or in the library). [*Contact the Copyright Officer (ictlegalcompliance@strath.ac.uk) of see www.strath.ac.uk/secretariat/copyright/ for guidance.]

Degree courses typically require students to purchase certain core textbooks in order to be able to undertake the programme of study. Such textbooks are not sold by the University to students and therefore are not University fees and are not covered by this guidance. Students source such textbooks from the appropriate retailers.

Departments should advise prospective students of any charges that they will incur in order to undertake that course of study.

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Examples of permissible charges:

1. Where a department provides a pack of printed materials which draws together articles/materials from various sources for the convenience of the students (e.g. to save students having to purchase a number of books), a charge to cover the cost of production may be made. Students should be informed that they may choose to purchase the printed version, or could access it online (printing it all or extracts themselves), or could access the texts directly.
2. Personal safety equipment which could reasonably be expected to be purchased by students, e.g. lab coats, safety goggles, where those items would become the property of the student. A department may choose to bulk buy such items and sell them at cost price to students. Students could choose to buy the items from the department or could purchase them elsewhere.
3. Field trips/off campus activities such as theatre trips.

Charges should not be made for the following:

1. Where a department requires students to utilise departmentally-produced workbooks, packs of printed handouts, etc, that are essential parts of classes. Such materials should be provided free of charge to the students.
2. Routine handouts issued in classes.
3. Materials which are essential to undertaking a class, e.g. chemicals, scientific glassware, etc."