



# Your On-Track Guide to Affordable Textbooks

## Strategies for Obtaining Books and Course Materials

Get a strong start each semester and make smart choices about your textbook purchases. Textbooks can be expensive, but having all the ones you need for your courses is integral to your academic success.

Did you know—you can click on the UMass Boston bookstore link in WISER when registering for classes to see the list and price of required textbooks? Register early and check out the list so you have time to shop around for your course materials at the best possible price!

This guide will give you strategies for getting the financial assistance and resources you need to buy your books at the lowest cost possible.

### 1

**Rentals and used books through the UMass Boston bookstore or online rental sites.** You can rent textbooks from the campus bookstore for, on average, less than half the new textbook price. Normal highlighting and note-taking are acceptable in the rented textbook. Follett, the company that runs the bookstore, has a large in-store as well as online rental program. Other online rental programs are [Chegg.com](http://Chegg.com), [BookRenter.com](http://BookRenter.com), or [CampusBookRentals.com](http://CampusBookRentals.com). You can also purchase used books at the book store or online.

### 2

**Price match policy of the campus bookstore.** The bookstore will match the price of a textbook if you find it cheaper elsewhere.

### 3

**E-textbooks.** Consider purchasing digital textbooks and other digital media at the bookstore or checking other sources such as [Vitalsource.com](http://Vitalsource.com), [BarnesandNoble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com), and [Study.intel.com](http://Study.intel.com). You should be aware of a couple of drawbacks, however. The average cost is 50% of a new book, which isn't always a good deal compared to used books or renting. E-textbooks typically expire after 180 days, so you should think of them as "digital rentals."

### 4

**Online sources.** Book shopping online offers a greater selection, which usually means lower prices. Your professor can let you know if older editions are acceptable for class use. Sometimes one can find "international editions" of the same book printed for other countries at cheaper prices. You can search the international arms of the websites below (like [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk)) or price comparison sites. You should be aware, however, that there might be differences in the text if it has a different ISBN and you may need to get the new book's page numbers and workbook questions from a friend. In addition to the [UMass Boston bookstore](http://UMass Boston bookstore), try these sources:

- New textbooks: [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), [BarnesandNoble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com), or [AbeBooks.com](http://AbeBooks.com) (carries hard-to-find or rare books).
- Used textbooks: [Half.com](http://Half.com) (an eBay company), [Textbooks.com](http://Textbooks.com), [Thriftbooks.com](http://Thriftbooks.com), or [eCampus.com](http://eCampus.com).
- Price comparison: [CampusBooks.com](http://CampusBooks.com), [BigWords.com](http://BigWords.com), or [AllBookstores.com](http://AllBookstores.com).

- 5** **A financial aid loan as part of a financial aid package.** Sometimes students request less financial aid than they need to be successful because they are worried about debt. By visiting the One Stop or Financial Aid Services, you can receive advice about how to balance concerns about debt with academic success.
- 6** **Excess checks for living expenses.** Any financial aid funds awarded in excess of your university bill for tuition and fees are available to you from the Bursar's Office in the form of a check or direct deposit after the add/drop deadline and financial aid has been disbursed.
- 7** **Book cards from the Bursar's office for excess funds.** Students with a credit balance *before the start of the semester* may qualify for a book card from the Bursar's Office—generally two to three weeks before the start of the semester. You must be enrolled for at least 6 credits with all financial aid documents submitted and processed by Financial Aid Services to request a book card. Only one book card can be given out per semester in the amount of either \$250, \$500, or \$750 (depending on available credit adjusted by your enrollment). *Book cards can be redeemed in the campus bookstore only.* Any balance remaining on the book card can be redeemed for cash during a cash-out period (typically three weeks after the add/drop deadline). If you want to buy materials elsewhere, book cards may be used to buy American Express gift cards from the campus bookstore, and these cards may be used anywhere, but they are not eligible for the cash-out option.
- 8** **Tax credit.** The American Opportunity Tax Credit is a \$2,500 federal tax credit for qualified education expenses paid for by an eligible student for the first four years of higher education. To claim AOTC, you must save your receipts and attach Form 8863 with your Form 1040 or Form 1040A.

## Questions?

Visit the One Stop for financial aid, billing, and registration questions, and contact the bookstore for textbook and course material questions:

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### UMass Boston Bookstore

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