



POLICY 9.22

POSITION POLICY

Learner Resources and Cost Savings Sharing

POLICY INTENT

To outline AUSU's position on the Learner Resources and Cost Savings programs

POLICY RESEARCH

AUSU believes that our members should receive a quality education that is competitive in its use of educational technologies, course and program offerings, and student services. AUSU is also supportive of the provision of electronic materials for our members. However, AUSU remains concerned that the shift away from print textbooks does not provide adequate choice for students on what form of learner resource best suits their learning style, accessibility needs, and budget. AUSU also remains concerned of the impact on those students who are learning while incarcerated. Although admittedly AU Accessibility Services offers students a choice in materials, these accommodations can be difficult for some members to obtain as a result of systemic barriers.

AUSU has advocated for this type of choice since the beginning of this change to learner resources, in light of the high volume of member concerns and complaints. In particular, AUSU is concerned with the lack of choice in product use and sharing of cost savings with students. Many members have expressed concerns that courses using digital and print learner resources charge the same material resource fee regardless of the licence, although they do not receive the same value as they would with a standard textbook. This is because access to the digital textbook is often limited to a specific timeframe leaving the student unable to access the digital textbook at a later date.

AUSU considers “choice” in this case as: any option that allows students to select a traditional print-based or electronic version of a textbook (assuming the book is available in both formats), with any cost savings associated with these changes to be passed on to the student.

Cost savings can also be achieved through the use of learner resources that are less expensive than traditional textbooks, such as open educational resources (OERs) and e-texts. Any cost savings achieved through use of these types of resources should also be passed onto the student.

Be it resolved that Athabasca University Students' Union will advocate to Athabasca University to always give students the choice in paper or digital format for learner resources, and that any cost savings associated with learner resources should be passed on to the student.