

June 2025 – N. 2

OER Initiative Newsletter

New Course Marking Options Coming Summer 2025

The OER Initiative has been working with the Registrar's Office to provide new course marking options for Fall 2025. The changes to the course marking options will provide more transparency for students and align our options with other major Texas universities.

So, what are course markings?

Course markings (also called *course attributes*, *tags*, *flags* or *designations*) are searchable labels applied to courses that help students quickly identify important information like costs, requirements, and general education fulfillment. They assist students in making informed decisions about their academic planning and are generally found in the Schedule of Classes.

A little bit of history

The movement for open and affordable course markings began in the mid-2000s following federal legislation on textbook price disclosure. The catalyst was a [2004 report by CALPIRG](#) showing textbook prices had risen four times faster than inflation. This sparked legislative action resulting in the 2008 [Higher Education Opportunity Act \(HEOA\)](#). HEOA requires that schools which receive Title IV funding for financial aid must disclose information about required textbooks and supplemental course materials including the retail price on the course schedule.

Texas Gets Specific

Course Marking is mandated in Texas under [SB 810](#) (2017) and is now part of the Texas Education Code [\(51.452\)](#). It requires that institutions make available "as soon as practicable":

- | | | |
|------------------|----------|------------------------|
| * retail price | * author | * publisher |
| * copyright date | * ISBN | * whether it is an OER |

In 2021, the Texas Legislature passed [HB 1027](#), ([TEC 51.4521](#)) requiring that inclusive access fee amounts, student data terms of use, and opt-out procedures be published in institutional course schedules. (Adapted in part from: [Marking Open and Affordable Courses: Best Practices and Case Studies](#), CC BY 4.0.)

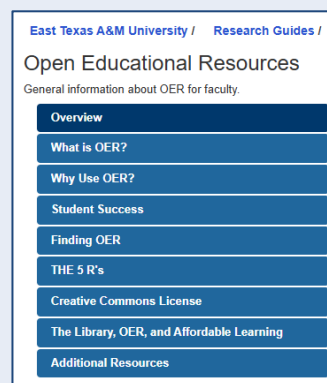
ETAMU marking

- **Inclusive Access** - Primary required textbook/course materials for this course are available to student on first class day for a flat fee that is added to the student's tuition bill. Student may opt-out of inclusive access but will need to secure materials from another source. Course may require purchase of a secondary text not covered by Inclusive Access.

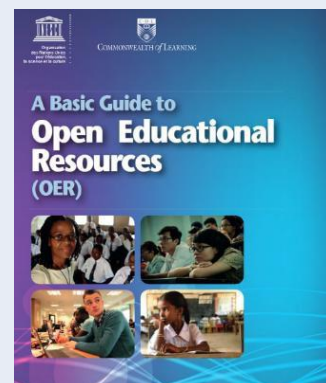
Resource highlight

Are you new to OER? Would you like to learn more about finding OER for your classes?

- Check out Waters Library [Open Educational Resources Research Guide](#) by Sarah Northam.



- Read the UNESCO [Basic Guide to OER](#) (2015) with a great summary of the key concepts, Creative Commons licenses, and ideas for distance education implementing OER.



- **Low-Cost (<\$40.00)** - Textbook/course materials for this course are below \$40.00 total.
- **Open Educational Resources (OER)** - There is no textbooks/course materials cost for this course since it utilizes openly licensed educational materials.
- **Zero Cost** - There is no textbook/course materials cost for this course since it utilizes library or other freely available resources.

Please support this policy by sharing this information with students, colleagues, and the community at large. For questions, please contact Sarah.Northam@etamu.edu.

OER Reality Check

Myth: “All OER are digital.”

Fact: OER take many formats including print, digital, audio, video, and more.

- OER can be viewed on a variety of devices, allowing students to simultaneously keep a printed copy at home, a mobile version to read on the bus on the way to school, and a browser-based version to read during class.
- OER can be legally converted from one format to another. This is especially helpful for campus disability services, who can create—and share—large print, braille, or audio versions of OER text without seeking any additional permissions.

(SPARC. 2017. [OER Mythbusting](#). Washington, DC: SPARC.)

Upcoming Events

- **OEN Engage!**

July 21-25, Open Education Network. Online. Registration coming soon: [OEN Engage! - Open Education Network](#).

- **OER Day at ETAMU**

Wednesday, September 24th, 10:00 am- 2:00 pm at the East Texas A&M RSC. More information is coming soon!

- **Open Education Conference**

October 28-30. Denver, CO and online. Registration: [Registration is Open! — Open Education Conference](#).



Contact Us

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