



ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

SESSION:

Public
 Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
 Discussion/Direction
 Information

TO: Academic Council

DATE: 28 May 2019

FROM: Glenn Harvel, Chair, CPRC and Langis Roy, Chair, GSC

SUBJECT: Directives on the Use of Digital Learning Resources for Assessment Purposes

ACADEMIC COUNCIL MANDATE:

Under the Policy Framework, Academic Council is the approval authority for Academic Policy Instruments, and will proceed with a decision after receiving a recommendation from the Curriculum and Program Review Committee (CPRC) and/or the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC).

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION

That, pursuant to the recommendation of CPRC and GSC, Academic Council approve the Directives on the Use of Digital Learning Resources for Assessment Purposes.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

The Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly Assisted Universities released by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU) sets out requirements including the development of an institutional policy with regard to Digital Learning Resources. The attached Directives have been developed to achieve compliance with these requirements.

CONSULTATION:

- Curriculum and Program Review Committee (April 2019)
- Graduate Studies Committee (April 2019)

As part of the policy framework consultation protocol, the draft Directives were distributed to on-campus partners for review and to provide feedback. This consultation period was over several weeks in March 2019 and feedback was garnered through an online form that individuals could fill out.

Over the duration of this period, 15+ submissions were received from students, staff, and faculty.

Summary of feedback received and accompanying action & rationale:

- 1) Several comments highlighted/pointed to other institutions' policies where the cost for the DLR was lower than the amount currently in the policy (\$100.00 +tax); wanted the amount in the policy to be lowered. Others commented that the amount in the directive was too low and would be difficult to implement.**

Action & Rationale: No change. The policies referenced were several years old and while it is recognized the need for a balance between cost for students, taking into consideration inflation over the next 3 years (the duration of the policy) it was decided that the current amount is reasonable.

- 2) There were comments on the definition being too broad and asking for a list of what is included. Comments noted that current amount for a DLR would restrict course instructors' ability to teach. Several examples, textbooks, clickers and case studies were given as DLRs current used within the classroom.**

Action & Rationale: It is not feasible to have a full list. The Directives have been amended to delineate between a DLR used as a teaching tool versus a DLR that will be used for assessment purposes. The Directives apply to DLRs used for assessment purposes that are outside the initial cost of a resource (e.g. has to be purchased in addition to a textbook). Exceptional cases can be reviewed and approved by the dean.

- 3) Add IT as a resource that course instructors can utilize when looking for cost-minimizing DLRs or an alternatives to a DLR. The policy that was distributed for consultation listed the Library as the primary contact.**

Action & Rationale: Changed to Teaching and Learning. As the TLC oversees course development and the course syllabi template, it is logical to have them as the first point of contact when instructors are seeking support. The instructor would reach out to TLC first and then the TLC staff can determine additional support (if) needed, such as IT or the Library.

- 4) Ensure that DLRs are AODA compliant and that they are accessible for those with a disability.**

Action & Rationale: No change as it is outlined in article 7.2, "When selecting a DLR, instructors should ensure that the resource meets the requirements and guidelines of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). For guidance or help on whether a DLR is compliant, contact the Teaching and Learning Center".

- 5) There were a number of comments about why these Directives are being developed, and if this will impede our ability to have online courses or the university's tech focus.**

Action & Rationale: The Directives are being developed as a result of requirements set out by the MTCU. These Directives fulfill our requirements while also having avenues to allow for exceptions (i.e. ancillary fees, deans discretion).

NEXT STEPS:

- Pending the approval of Academic Council, these Directives will be posted to the Policy Library.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- Directives on the Use of Digital Learning Resources for Assessment Purposes



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|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Classification Number | <i>To be assigned by Policy Office</i> |
| Parent Policy | Academic Staff Responsibilities with Regard to Students |
| Framework Category | Academic |
| Approving Authority | Academic Council |
| Policy Owner | Provost |
| Approval Date | DRAFT FOR REVIEW |
| Review Date | |
| Supersedes | |

DIRECTIVES ON THE USE OF DIGITAL LEARNING RESOURCES FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

PURPOSE

1. To provide direction on the use of those digital learning resources (DLR) for which there is a charge in accordance with the *Ministry Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities*.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these Procedures the following definitions apply:

“Digital learning resource (DLR)” means materials (e.g. online applications) as well as associated devices (e.g. clickers) that would aid or facilitate instruction, learning, and assessment.

“Ministry” means the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These Directives apply to the use of DLRs for assessment purposes in credit courses and programs at the university.
4. Digital Resources approved through the ancillary fee process are exempt from these Directives.
5. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Directives.

GUIDELINES

6. The Ministry permits, under certain conditions, the universities to ask students to purchase digital learning materials/resources. DLRs can include access to online learning resources or databases. Digital test/assessment tools can include simulation tools, online quizzes and online exercises.

Note: In establishing these Directives, the University acknowledges that it is the responsibility of instructors to determine what resources are most appropriate in supporting students’ learning.

7. USAGE

- 7.1. In all cases, instructors are strongly encouraged to consider the affordability of

the resource(s) for students. Instructors should first reach out to the UOIT Teaching and Learning Centre to discuss DLR alternatives and seek cost-effective measures already provided at the institution prior to determining if they may need to ask students to purchase a DLR for assessment purposes.

- 7.2.** When such DLRs are not appropriate, the instructor may ask students to purchase DLRs provided the *following conditions are fulfilled*:
- a)** Instructors may require students to purchase physical and/or digital textbooks that have bundled software or online access to additional learning resources, provided students have options to purchase the bundled components separately (students shall not be required to purchase e-textbooks to obtain the assessment component of the materials).
 - b)** When selecting a DLR, instructors should ensure that the resource meets the requirements and guidelines of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). For guidance or help on whether a DLR is compliant, contact the Teaching and Learning Center.
 - c)** Instructors may assign 20% of their students' overall grade in a course to assessment activities purchased as DLRs. In exceptional circumstances the Dean can approve written requests for the use of these resources for mandatory assessments that have a higher value.
 - d)** Where an exception is made to the maximum assessment amount the instructor must provide a no-fee alternative to assessment activities upon request (this may include re-weighting of other assessment components).
 - e)** The maximum cost permitted per one term course for purchased DLRs will be \$100 (before taxes). Instructors may request an exception to the maximum amount with the Dean. Such a request must be made and approved in writing.
 - f)** A general bursary is available through financial aid to assist students in need.
 - g)** Instructors will communicate details concerning the use of DLRs clearly in their course syllabus. These outlines are submitted to the dean's office. Course syllabi will indicate, where relevant:
 - The DLRs (required or optional), including test/assessment tools;
 - The weight of the total course grade associated with the use of the test/assessment tools;
 - The details on how to obtain such material, and;
 - The details on the no-fee alternative (if applicable).

8. Deans must report their faculty use of DLRs to the ancillary fee committee annually by November 1st. The report must include the following: course code, cost, digital learning resource name, and assessment weight. The purpose of this reporting is to gather data that will help the University to review and revise this policy as necessary.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

9. These Directives will be reviewed at least every three years unless the Ministry's *Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines* is reviewed and updated before then. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review these Directives.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

10. Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, *Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly Assisted Universities*.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

11. Academic Staff Responsibilities with Regard to Students (ADM 1599.02)