

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

SESSION:

Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

TO: Academic Council

DATE: April 25, 2023

FROM: Undergraduate Studies Committee

SUBJECT: Digital Learning Resources Directive Amendment

ACADEMIC COUNCIL MANDATE:

- Under the Policy Framework, the Undergraduate Studies Committee is the Approval Authority for Undergraduate Academic procedures and directives.
- The Undergraduate Studies Committee approved the proposed revisions to the Digital Learning Resources Directive. We are presenting the amended copy to Academic Council for information.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

- The Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly Assisted Universities released by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) sets out requirements including the development of an institutional policy with regard to Digital Learning Resources. The University approved a Digital Learning Resources Directive on June 25, 2019.
- The Policy Framework establishes a three-year review window for policy instruments.

CONSULTATION:

- Academic Council (September 27, 2022)
- Online Consultation (September 19 to 30, 2022)
- Undergraduate Studies Committee (December 20, 2022)
- Undergraduate Studies Committee for Approval (March 23, 2023)
- Academic Council for information (April 25, 2023)

NEXT STEPS:

- Approval was received from the Undergraduate Studies Committee on March 23, 2023. The new version of Digital Learning Resources Directive Amendment (Policy 1599.07) is in effect and will be placed into the policy library.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- ACD 1599.07 - Directives on the use of Digital Learning Resources for Assessment Purposes (Tracked Changes)
- ACD 1599.07 - Directives on the use of Digital Learning Resources for Assessment Purposes (Clean Copy)

Classification Number	1599.07
Parent Policy	Academic Staff Responsibilities with Regard to Students
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Approval Date	June 25, 2019
Review Date	June 2022
Last Updated	Editorial Amendments, February 18, 2020 November March, 2023
Supersedes	

DIRECTIVES ON THE USE OF DIGITAL LEARNING RESOURCES FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

PURPOSE

1. The University recognizes the ongoing emergence of new learning materials and methodologies that may support pedagogical practice and enhance teaching and learning. Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) provide an alternative to physical textbooks and may include bundled Digital Assessment Tools (DATs) used for self-assessment and/or to contribute to a course mark. DATs may also be standalone in nature. The University recognizes that these resources may come with additional costs that may be onerous for some students.
2. To provide direction on the use of those DLRs for which there is a charge, in accordance with the [Ministry of Colleges and Universities Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities, 2013-2014 to 2016-2017](#).

Commented [LL1]: New intro statement of purpose to help set the context.

DEFINITIONS

3. For the purposes of these Procedures the following definitions apply:
“Digital Learning Resource (DLR)” means digital materials (e.g., online applications, online textbooks, or other online course materials) as well as associated devices (e.g., clickers) that would aid or facilitate instruction, learning, and assessment.

“Digital Assessment Tools (DAT)” means a standalone or bundled portion of a DLR which is used for assessment purposes.

Commented [LL2]: Important distinction made between a DLR and the DAT...this allows for the document to be more clearly written.

“Ministry” means the [Province of Ontario’s](#) Ministry of ~~Training~~ Colleges and Universities.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

4. These Directives apply to ~~the use of DLRs, DLR-embedded DATs, and standalone DATs and their use~~ for [instruction, learning, and](#) assessment purposes in credit courses and programs at the university.

5. [Digital Resources DLRs and DATs](#) approved through the ancillary fee process are exempt from these Directives.

5-6. [Open educational resources \(OERs\) available to students at no cost are exempt from these Directives.](#)

6-7. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Directives.

DIRECTIVES

7-8. [Under certain conditions, The the](#) Ministry permits, ~~under certain conditions, the Ontario~~ universities to ask students to purchase [DLRs, digital learning materials/resources](#). DLRs can include access to online learning resources or databases. ~~Digital test/assessment tools~~ [DATs](#) can include simulation tools, online quizzes and online exercises. [DATs may or may not be embedded within DLRs.](#)

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.

8-9. USAGE

8-1-9.1. In all cases, instructors are strongly encouraged to consider the affordability of the [resource\(s\) DLRs and DATs](#) for students. Instructors should first reach out to the University's Teaching and Learning Centre [and/or Library](#) to discuss DLR [and DAT](#) 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 [or DAT](#) for assessment purposes.

8-2-9.2. When such ~~DLRs~~ [DLR and DAT alternatives](#) are not [available or](#) appropriate, the instructor may ask students to purchase [DLRs and their associated DATs alternatives](#) 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~~ [DLRs](#) to obtain the assessment component of the materials.
- b) When selecting a DLR [or DAT](#), instructors should ensure that the resource meets the requirements and guidelines of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) [and the Province of Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FIPPA\)](#). For guidance or help on whether a DLR [or DAT](#) is compliant, [instructors should](#) contact the Teaching and Learning Center.

Commented [LL3]: The TLC also reviews all products to ensure they are FIPPA compliant. Included for the sake of completeness.

- c) Instructors may assign up to a maximum of 20% of their students' overall grade in a course to assessment activities embedded as a DATs within purchased DLRs or purchased standalone DATs. ~~purchased as DLRs.~~
- e)d) In exceptional circumstances, the Dean ~~can may~~ approve written requests for the use of ~~these resources~~ DLR-embedded and/or standalone DATs for mandatory assessments that have a higher grade value.
- d) Where an exception is made to the maximum 20% 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 each one-term course for the DAT portion of a purchased DLRs will be \$100-65 (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~~ General bursaries ~~is are~~ available through Student Award and Financial Aid located in the Registrar's Office to assist students in need.
- g) Instructors will communicate details concerning the use of DLRs and standalone and/or DLR-embedded DATs clearly in their course syllabus. These outlines are submitted to the ~~dean's~~ Dean's office. Course syllabi will indicate, where relevant:
 - The DLRs (required or optional), including explicit identification of the embedded DAT test/assessment tools;
 - The weight of the total course grade associated with the use of of the test/assessment tools DATs;
 - The details on how to obtain ~~such these~~ DLR and DAT materials, and;
 - The details on the no-fee alternatives (if applicable) and how to obtain them.

10. Deans must report their faculty's use of DLRs, DLR-embedded DATs, and/or standalone DATs, or declare no use of DLRs the same, to the ~~ancillary fee committee~~ Office of the Provost prior to the beginning of each academic terms ~~by or~~ no later than:

- September 15 Fall Term
- January 15 Winter Term
- May 15 Spring Term
- July 15 Summer Term

Commented [LL4]: New dates which allow Deans to report after the beginning of each term, but also prior to the end of summer when the year end report can be released. See 12 below.

~~11.~~ ~~annually for the current fall term and upcoming winter term by November 1st.~~ The report must include the following: ~~term,~~ course code, cost, ~~digital learning resource~~ DLR/DAT name, ~~(and where applicable, if whether the DLR and DAT are bundled the DLR name), and~~ assessment weight ~~for DATs.~~ The purpose of this reporting is to gather data that will help the University to review and revise this policy as necessary.

~~9.12.~~ Based on the information received, the Office of the Provost shall prepare and make available an annual report on each faculty's use of DLRs and DATs on an annual basis, from September 1 through August 31 of each academic year.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

~~10.13.~~ 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

~~11.14.~~ Ontario Ministry of ~~Training, Colleges,~~ and Universities, *Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly Assisted Universities*.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

~~12.15.~~ Academic Staff Responsibilities with Regard to Students (ADM 1599.02)



Classification Number	1599.07
Parent Policy	Academic Staff Responsibilities with Regard to Students
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Approval Date	June 25, 2019
Review Date	June 2022
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PURPOSE

1. The University recognizes the ongoing emergence of new learning materials and methodologies that may support pedagogical practice and enhance teaching and learning. Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) provide an alternative to physical textbooks and may include bundled Digital Assessment Tools (DATs) used for self-assessment and/or to contribute to a course mark. DATs may also be standalone in nature. The University recognizes that these resources may come with additional costs that may be onerous for some students.
2. To provide direction on the use of those DLRs for which there is a charge, in accordance with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities *Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities, 2013-2014 to 2016-2017*.

DEFINITIONS

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

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

“Digital Assessment Tool (DAT)” means a standalone or bundled portion of a DLR which is used for assessment purposes.

“Ministry” means the Province of Ontario’s Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

4. These Directives apply to DLRs, DLR-embedded DATs, and standalone DATs and their use for instruction, learning, and assessment purposes in credit courses and programs at the university.
5. DLRs and DATs approved through the ancillary fee process are exempt from these Directives.

6. Open educational resources (OERs) available to students at no cost are exempt from these Directives.
7. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Directives.

DIRECTIVES

8. Under certain conditions, the Ministry permits Ontario universities to ask students to purchase DLRs. DLRs can include access to online learning resources or databases. DATs can include simulation tools, online quizzes and online exercises. DATs may or may not be embedded within DLRs.

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.

9. USAGE

9.1. In all cases, instructors are strongly encouraged to consider the affordability of the DLRs and DATs for students. Instructors should first reach out to the University's Teaching and Learning Centre and/or Library to discuss DLR and DAT 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 or DAT for assessment purposes.

9.2. When such DLR and DAT alternatives are not available or appropriate, the instructor may ask students to purchase DLRs and their associated DATs 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 DLRs to obtain the assessment component of the materials.
- b) When selecting a DLR or DAT, instructors should ensure that the resource meets the requirements and guidelines of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and the Province of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). For guidance or help on whether a DLR or DAT is compliant, instructors should contact the Teaching and Learning Center.
- c) Instructors may assign up to a maximum of 20% of their students' overall grade in a course to assessment activities embedded as DATs within purchased DLRs or purchased standalone DATs.
- d) In exceptional circumstances, the Dean may approve written requests for the use of DLR-embedded and/or standalone DATs for mandatory assessments that have a higher grade value. Where an exception is made to the maximum 20% assessment amount, the instructor must provide a no-fee alternative to assessment activities upon request.
- e) The maximum cost permitted per each one-term course for the DAT portion of a purchased DLR will be \$65 (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) General bursaries are available through Student Award and Financial Aid located in the Registrar's Office to assist students in need.
- g) Instructors will communicate details concerning the use of DLRs and standalone or embedded DATs 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 explicit identification of the embedded DAT assessment tools;
 - The weight of the total course grade associated with the use of DATs;
 - The details on how to obtain these DLR and DAT materials, and;
 - The details on the no-fee alternatives (if applicable) and how to obtain them.

10. Deans must report their faculty's use of DLRs, DLR-embedded DATs, and/or standalone DATs, or declare no use of the same, to the Office of the Provost prior to the beginning of each academic term or no later than:

- September 15 Fall Term
- January 15 Winter Term
- May 15 Spring Term
- July 15 Summer Term

11. The report must include the following: term, course code, cost, DLR/DAT name (and where applicable, whether the DLR and DAT are bundled), and assessment weight for DATs. The purpose of this reporting is to gather data that will help the University to review and revise this policy as necessary.

12. Based on the information received, the Office of the Provost shall prepare and make available an annual report on each faculty's use of DLRs and DATs on an annual basis, from September 1 through August 31 of each academic year.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

13. 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

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

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

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