‘I AM PUTTING MY GRADES AT RISK BECAUSE I REFUSE TO PAY SUCH RIDICULOUS PRICES FOR TEXTBOOKS’:

STUDENT VIEWS ON THE COST OF AND ACCESS TO TEXTBOOKS

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Studies in the U.S.A. are indicating that the rising cost of textbooks is impacting on students' learning outcomes and that there are benefits in using open textbooks which are free and readily accessible to students (Hilton, 2016). Allied to the problem of the cost of purchasing textbooks is the question of access: libraries can provide copies – via high-demand services when necessary – and copyright licensing also allows excerpts to be made available via password-protected systems but each of these options is limited and may not meet demand.

The study presented in this report begins to explore the possible effects that the cost of textbooks or access to copies may be having on how University of Otago students engage with their courses. The study sought to understand better the student point of view by asking them about their behaviours with regard to buying or getting access to the textbooks that their lecturers assign for them. Informed by the student voice, we can better understand local textbook practices and the possible influence that these may have upon their sense of achievement and success, particularly in the context of aiming to provide an outstanding student experience at the University of Otago.

In summary, the findings showed that:

- 43% of respondents buy required textbooks 'most of the time' or 'always' and 48% said they sell them with the same frequency. They are slightly more likely to buy a textbook than access it through the library.
- 20% said they spent nothing on required textbooks in the year of the survey and another 38% spent under $250; first and second year students tend to spend more than those in later years of study.
- About one-third (34%) said when they don't buy a required textbook; they just do without, despite a clear sense from many that they thought they were beneficial in academic terms. There is a very heavy reliance on materials provided by lecturers via the Learning Management System (77% utilising these 'most of the time' or 'always'). They will seek alternative sources, indicating a preference for freely available online sources above library resources.
- Half of respondents indicated that they felt lack of access had had a negative effect on them academically. This was a result of them not having the textbook or not getting access through the library.
- Respondents tend not to factor the cost of textbooks into course selection, and it is rare for them to withdraw from a course because of the cost of a required textbook. However, they frequently feel textbooks reflect very poor value, which is considered not only in purely financial terms but also in terms of the value to the course as a whole.

1.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented below highlight key areas for consideration and action. The three key areas relate to: the student voice; the effect of textbook cost and accessibility on study behaviours; and curriculum decision making and planning.

Recommendations are:

1. For the university

a) Promote discussion of this study amongst staff and students
b) Clarify expectations about textbooks through a stocktake of course outlines
c) Determine the extent to which information about textbooks is readily available to support course choice and enrolment decisions
d) Report the alignment of course information on textbooks with policy
e) Report the alignment of access to textbooks with policy

2. For academic staff

a) Acknowledge students' views about textbooks, the insight these offer into study behaviours, and the impact on learning
b) Encourage the development of critical information seeking behaviours
c) Assess students' views on textbook affordability and accessibility within particular papers and programmes
d) Test your assumptions about textbooks, including their viability, place and role in courses, teaching and learning
e) Maximise Library services in the selection and use of resources, including textbooks.

3. For research

a) Administer this study to a wider group of students to provide a more comprehensive picture
b) Administer this study to a defined group of students during a review of a course or programme
c) Modify the survey instrument for use by other institutions

2. INTRODUCTION

What effect do our textbook choices have on our students' study behaviours? The study presented in this report begins to explore the possible effects that the cost of textbooks or access to copies may be having on how University of Otago students engage with their courses.

The *Oxford Dictionaries Online*[1] describes 'textbook' as "a book used as a standard work for the study of a particular subject". In common practice, the traditional print textbook has been regarded as the foundation for advancing learning, designed to provide an authoritative pedagogic version of an area of knowledge, according to the community's or society's beliefs about what it is important for students to learn (e.g., Lowe, 2009; Williams, 2014). Ideally, textbooks serve to guide discussion, frame issues, illustrate processes, identify critical questions and, therefore, enrich the learning experience. The choice of textbooks is made by lecturers and others involved in designing a course, and usually students tend not to be involved directly in the decisions surrounding that choice. Studies in the U.S.A. are indicating that the rising cost of textbooks is impacting on students' learning outcomes and that there are benefits in using open textbooks which are free and readily accessible to students (Hilton, 2016). Allied to the problem of the cost of purchasing textbooks is the question of access: libraries can provide copies – via high-demand services when necessary – and copyright licensing also allows excerpts to be made available via password-protected systems but each of these options is limited and may not meet demand. At Otago, textbooks remain a critical component of many courses and academic programmes, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that there is a tendency to rely on traditional, purchased textbooks rather than, or in association with, other resources.

This study sought to understand better the student point of view by asking them about their behaviours with regard to buying or getting access to the textbooks that their lecturers assign for them. Informed by the student voice, we can better understand local textbook practices and the possible influence that these may have upon their sense of achievement and success, particularly in the context of aiming to provide an outstanding student experience at the University of Otago. There may also be implications for institutional goals around recruitment, retention and attainment.

2.1 BACKGROUND

In the current higher education environment, a number of factors suggest that the cost of textbooks may be impacting on the study behaviours and choices of students.

- Evidence from overseas: the cost of textbooks is having a negative effect on student behaviours (e.g., Senack & Donoghue, 2016). The problem is serious enough that it is not only influencing students' choice of courses but also their academic achievement.
- Higher education in general: there are ever-growing numbers of enrolments at tertiary institutions with an increasing variety of students from all academic levels and backgrounds. Alongside this, university staff, such as librarians, express concerns about the ability to provide a wide range of suitable resources (e.g., Werner, 2014).
- The textbooks themselves: what they are, how they are used by both teaching staff within courses and students, where they originate and their relevance to a course (e.g., as discussed in Weller, de los Arcos, Farrow, Pitt, & McAndrew, 2015). The nature, intentions, structure and contents of a course, including the expectations and opportunities to engage and interact with learning resources will influence the study responses and approaches of students (e.g., Entwistle, 2000).

[1] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/textbook. Accessed 26 August 2016.

- For full-time students under the age of 55, this includes an optional allocation of up to $1000 for course-related costs, specifically "to buy materials or services for your course." [2] However, actual course costs vary and course-related costs are not limited to the purchase of textbooks. This means that it is unclear whether the cost of textbooks is an issue as widespread, or as serious as, research from overseas suggests.
- The textbook market: controversy about the textbook market is not new (e.g., see commentary in the Peabody Journal, 1924), with publishers' behaviours influenced and determined by their commercial interests. These behaviours include the regular publication of new editions and the continually rising costs of academic publishing (e.g., Larivière, Haustein & Mongeon, 2015).

Because of the lack evidence about the New Zealand situation, the questions remain: is the cost of textbooks having an effect on student study choices and behaviours?; and associated with that, is the effect a negative one? This report presents the initial part of a larger investigation into these questions.

2.2 ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT

First, section 2 describes the context for the study, its design, and an overview of the research process including the data analysis strategies used. Section 3 presents the findings, focussing specifically on affordability behaviours and access behaviours. A discussion and summary appear in section 4. Finally, in section 5, recommendations are presented along with some reflections and commentary in the light of the wider research and institutional contexts. In addition, limitations of the current study and possibilities for further investigations are presented.

2.3 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, a research-intensive University within a tertiary education environment where there is a legislative requirement that teaching and research are closely interdependent. The University of Otago research context differs from the Senack study (2014; Senack & Donoghue, 2016). Our study was conducted on one campus at a University in New Zealand, whereas, the Senack study was conducted over 156 different campuses of different institutions in North America.

(In 2015 there were 18,421 equivalent full time students, with 4,171 students undertaking postgraduate studies.[3] Courses and programmes are offered across the key disciplines in Commerce, Health Sciences, Humanities, and the Sciences. Otago's primary campus is based in Dunedin with smaller, more specialised campuses based in other New Zealand cities; Invercargill, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland. This study was undertaken at the Dunedin Campus. At least 85% of first year students come from outside Dunedin to attend, many of whom for that first year reside in residential colleges before moving on to independent living.

In New Zealand, students have access to New Zealand student loans and allowances schemes – the latter being means-tested – for course fees and living costs and to an additional up to $1000 per annum for 'course related costs.' These funds are accessed by just under three quarters of eligible students (Ministry of Education, 2015).

2.4 DESIGN AND METHODS

The broad goal of this study was to explore the effect that the cost of core textbooks has on students' study choices and associated perceptions and access behaviours. In order to undertake this investigation, the following objectives were developed:

[2] http://www.studylink.govt.nz/student-loan/ Accessed 26 August 2016.
[3] http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/quickstats.html Accessed 26 August 2016.

(a) to develop a survey, based on previous research undertaken in the USA (Senack, 2014; Senack & Donoghue, 2016), that is suitable for use at the University of Otago;
(b) to elicit students' views, through the survey, about their experiences of using core textbooks that have incurred cost and/or those available as open education resources;
(c) to undertake a stocktake of institutional expectations about core textbooks in courses through a scan of course outlines drawn from across the four University Divisions;
(d) to identify relevant institutional policy documents related to the use of core textbooks;
(e) to develop assertions about student views related to core textbooks and their associated study behaviours.; and
(f) to draw implications for selection of, and access provision practices for, course textbooks by teaching and library service staff.

Ethics approval was attained (approval notification appears in Appendix 1 – Category B Ethics Approval Letter).

This report focusses on the outcomes of objectives (a) and (b) and contributes to the outcomes of (e) and (f). Objectives (c) and (d) will be completed in 2017.

2.5 SURVEY

The questionnaire from the US study referred to in section 2.1 (Senack, 2014) was used as a starting point for the development of the survey for the current study. The following provides a brief outline of the work that was done to ensure the suitability of the survey instrument for use in the University of Otago context.

2.5.1 DRAFT SURVEY

An initial draft of the survey was "tested" with three focus groups of students drawn from the Class Representative group (commonly called "Class Reps") of 2015 (n=811). After responding to an email invitation to participate, twenty-five students from across the disciplines were selected.

Class Reps are students who have volunteered to represent their peers by providing feedback on each course or paper to the responsible teaching department. Volunteering to undertake the role of being a Class Rep is suggestive of a high level of engagement with study and a tendency towards responsibility and/or leadership. As less than five per cent of students become Class Reps in any one year, it is acknowledged that the students who participated in the focus groups were not necessarily representative of the broader student demographic. However, the selection of participants using purposive sampling (Palys, 2008) was undertaken because the assumed engagement of these students in study life and, as part of that, interest in the topic of the survey, meant that the nature of the feedback they were able to provide would be rich and relatively easy to gather.

Each focus group session was led by one of the researchers, while a second researcher observed and made written notes of the discussion. A number of questions about the draft survey were posed to the groups, to check interpretation and understanding, coverage of issues, and to gather suggestions for modifications. As a result, the focus group sessions provided practical feedback that enabled refinement of the survey instrument. One of the key outcomes of this process was arriving at a clear understanding of the meaning of 'required textbook.'

Further details about the focus group process can be found in Appendix 2 – Details about Survey Development.

2.5.2 FINALISED SURVEY AND ADMINISTRATION

The final online survey instrument, entitled *Textbooks - cost and access*, appears in Appendix 3 - Final Survey. The survey was generated using Qualtrics[4] software, for which the University of Otago has a licence.

The following definition of 'required textbook' was included on the first page of the finalised survey.

> ***What is a textbook?***
>
> *For the purposes of this survey, think about texts/textbooks that*
>
> - *are "required," "prescribed" or "essential" for your courses;*
> - *you have to pay for yourself or access through the library; and*
> - *are either print or electronic.*
>
> *Don't think about textbooks that are:*
>
> - *optional texts, textbooks or readings; or*
> - *'course readers' or 'course packs' (which you might pay for but this only covers the cost of copying)*

The invitation to participate in the (finalised) survey was sent to the target group, the Class Reps (n= 811), via email. An incentive to win one of ten $50 supermarket vouchers was included. The survey was opened on 22 July 2015 and remained open until midnight of 31 July. A reminder was sent on 30 July.

2.6 PROCESS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Of the 811 Class Reps who were invited, 239 responses were received. The response rate was therefore 239÷811=29.4%; 233 respondents completed the whole survey and six did not. This means that earlier questions in the survey have a slightly higher number of responses than those at the end of the survey.

Qualtrics software enables the generation of reports which can be inserted into Excel documents and in turn into SPSS or other statistical analysis software. Aggregated summary data were generated from the survey and analysed by the research team. The summarised demographic information about the respondents appears in Appendix 4 – Results: Respondents' Demographics.

One of the research team carried out an initial assessment of the questions that produced statistical data. This was then presented to the research team for verification and further analysis. For free text responses (Q3, Q6, Q10, Q23 and Q36), two researchers independently analysed the raw data to identify common themes using keywords. The results of these independent analyses were then compared, resulting in the identification of 17 sub-themes, which after further analysis were refined into four meta-themes:

- affordability;
- access;
- perceptions of academic value; and
- behaviour/attitudes.

A list of the codes appears in Appendix 5 – Free Text Comments Analysis: Codes, Themes, Scope.

[4] https://www.qualtrics.com/

3 FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the survey, grouped into two areas of focus: affordability and accessibility behaviours, with each in turn revealing perceptions about values and general experiences related to textbooks.

3.1 AFFORDABILITY

3.1.1 WHAT DO STUDENTS SPEND ON TEXTBOOKS?

The graph in Figure A shows the amounts the respondents said they spent on textbooks, in answer to Q1 *About how much did you spend on textbooks this year (print and electronic)?* (238 responded to this question). More than half (137 or 58%) said that they spent less than $250, with another 47 indicating no spending at all. Spending above $500 was about one in five students (44 or 18%). The ranges, at $250 intervals, enabled calculation of a minimum and maximum amount that respondents spent on textbooks, a total of at least $43, 941, or at most, $91, 500 (median=$67, 720.50). The average spent per respondent therefore was between $184 and $384 (median= $284).

There was an option in this survey question to indicate spending of higher amounts than presented in the data here, but no respondents reported spending that much. The survey was run in late July, which was only three or four weeks into the Second Semester, meaning there may have been further spending by some students in the remainder of the teaching period.

Figure A: Amounts spent on textbooks

These data were considered in conjunction with years of study (Q14 *How many years of tertiary study have you done (including your current year)?*). The chart in Figure B shows the breakdown spending by year of study. Note that, since there were not the same number of respondents for each year of study, Figure B presents these as proportional to the total number of respondents in each year.

Figure B: Breakdown of spending by year of study

The pattern in each year is broadly similar, with spending concentrated in the lower ranges. However, first year students, in blue, spent the most on required textbooks, with fewer of them spending nothing (n=4 or 6% of all first year respondents) and more of them indicating higher levels of spending, as evidenced by the blue line being higher on the right side of Figure B. Over one-third of first year respondents spent more than $500 (15%, 18% and 4% reported spending of $501-750, $751-1000 and $1001-1250 respectively). Second year students, in orange, shadow this pattern of spending at slightly reduced levels. By third, fourth and fifth years there is a drop in total spending. In each of these categories: around one-third spent nothing; most spent less than $250 (between 74%-82% reported $0-$250 of spending); a few spent between $251-500 (13-16% of respondents); and only 8 individuals out of 105 (8%) third, fourth or fifth years had spent more than $500. Compare this with the 37% of first years who spent more than $500. This could suggest strategic spending of resources as students gain more experience in study at tertiary level, a theme that did emerge during the focus group testing of the survey tool. However, there could be other reasons for this. It should be noted that degree structures are flexible at Otago. A student could be taking a first level paper and yet be in the third year of study.

3.1.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE COST OF TEXTBOOKS ON STUDY DECISIONS

Linked closely to cost and affordability of textbooks is their perceived academic value for students, especially in terms of the influence of the cost of textbooks on study decisions. These views were gathered principally through the following survey questions:

- Q2 *Have you ever decided against taking a course or withdrawn from one because of the cost of textbooks?* followed by free text comment in response to Q3 *Tell us about your decision*.
- Q4 *The cost of textbooks is a factor in deciding which courses I take*
- Q9 *Has lack of access to textbooks ever had a negative effect on you academically?* followed by free text comments in response to Q10 *Please tell us more about your answer*.

Additional comments were found in responses to Q36 *Do you have any other thoughts or comments to make that weren't covered in other questions? Please enter them here*.

In one of the most clear-cut results, 95% of respondents (226) indicated that they had not decided to withdraw from or course or not to enrol in one because of the cost of textbooks (Q2). Only 5% (12 respondents) indicated that they had made conscious decisions and/or had given serious thought to the cost. For example,

> I didn't withdraw, but I seriously considered withdrawing from [course] as the textbook was $70.00 which I know is not expensive in comparison to other subjects but for half a year and the size and content of the book I didn't think it was worth it.
>
> The cost of textbooks was ultimately the deciding factor between taking [this course] or not.

Others rationalised their spending or their decision not to spend money on textbooks. For example,

> Felt that if I could not find an alternative to find the cash to be able to complete the learning criteria of the course that I would have taken. So I would then wait and work a bit longer just to buy the recommended book, especially if the lecturer or course provider stated that the newer edition was preferable or that they would be referring to the newer edition, than the previous years.
>
> Only buy a textbook if 100% necessary
>
> I couldn't afford the textbook or justify spending that much on one book which I would use for one semester so chose not to.

This low number of respondents who stated that their course choices have been impacted on by textbook cost is in marked contrast to the result in the US PIRG study (Senack, 2014). In that study, 48% of respondents indicated that they did alter which classes they took based on textbook costs, either taking fewer or alternative courses (Senack, 2014, p. 12). This could be reflective of the differences in methodology between our survey and the Senack study (for example, the data collection method was quite different) and indeed differences between the US and NZ in the nature and requirements of courses and processes involved in enrolling and withdrawing from courses. It must also be pointed out that the respondent group in the current study was not necessarily representative of the wider student population of the University (see section 2.5.1).

3.1.3 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ACCESS AND EFFECT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Building on these results, an examination of responses to Q9 provides some more insights into the nature of “access” as viewed by respondents, and their perceptions of negative academic effects due to access. In Q9, “access” was intended to convey either having/owning the textbook or having ready access to a copy, either provided via a learning management system (LMS) or through a library service.

While studies elsewhere, in quite different educational settings, have indicated that very high proportions of students reported feeling negatively affected academically by lack of access to textbooks (e.g., Buczynski, 2007; Senack & Donoghue, 2016), it was still surprising to see 49% of Otago respondents reporting that they either ‘definitely’ or ‘probably’ felt affected negatively (see Figure C). More students felt negatively affected than those who said they had not, with 41% suggesting that ‘probably’ or ‘definitely’ they had not been affected. This question received a higher-than-normal number of ‘I don’t know’ responses (10%).

Figure C: Negative effect of lack of access to textbooks

In considering the difference according to subject area, Figure D shows that there did not appear to be much. Figure D displays percentages of respondents who answered in each category as a percentage of the total number who indicated they study in that subject area; respondents could also choose more than one subject area.

Figure D: Effect of lack of access to textbooks by subject area

Neither was there evidence of any strong correlation between year of study and being affected. This is shown in Figure E.

Figure E: Effect of lack of access to textbooks by year of study

As discussed above in relation to Q2, respondents did not report that they would not take a course or withdraw from one because of textbook cost. However, deciding which course to take (Q4) is more likely to be affected, as shown in Figure F. A total of 43% of respondents suggested cost 'rarely' or 'sometimes' affected whether to take a course. Nevertheless, just over half (53%) said it was 'never' a factor.

Figure F: Influence of cost of textbooks on course choice

Examining these overall results in the light of those who felt they have been affected academically in a negative way, as shown in Figure G, for those respondents who felt affected (shown in the orange line) cost was more likely to be considered when deciding which courses to take than for those who didn't probably or definitely did not feel affected. (Once again, the results of this question may reflect the generally positive personal attributes of the respondent group.)

Figure G: Textbook cost and course choice - comparison of affected and not affected academically

The orange line in Figure G shows that the number of respondents who indicated that lack of access has had a negative effect on them academically 'probably' or 'definitely' (Q9); the blue line shows those who did not report negative effects. This demonstrates a slight propensity for those who felt affected to be more likely to consider cost when deciding which courses to take, bearing in mind that the sample group of class representatives may not be indicative of the general student population, where we might expect the effect to be more pronounced. Where cost was never a factor in course choice, 62 respondents felt unaffected by lack of access as opposed to 49 who did; those for whom cost was sometimes a factor in course choice, were three times more likely to indicate they felt negatively affected academically. A comment in response to Q3 provides an example.

> The cost outweighed the need to take the paper as their [sic] were other papers available that did not require me to purchase a course reader or expensive textbook.

In the free text comments, 31% of respondents (76) stated that there was academic value in having required textbooks. All except two of these free text comments were in response to Q10, which asked for further details from respondents who had answered 'definitely yes' or 'probably yes' to Q9 *Has lack of access to textbooks ever had a negative effect on you academically*? The comments reflected the positive value of textbooks as well as students' perceptions of poorer academic performance had they undertaken their study without required textbooks.

> For a short time, I went without a textbook due to its price. After seeing myself fall behind I purchased it and began to catch up once more.

> It's definitely mentally stressing to have a lecturer tell you to read a page or two which may not even be that important, because you don't know what those pages' content is because you don't have the textbook. It feels like you're slipping and being left behind and not on top of things.

> Limited access to textbooks would have a negative effect on academic performance. It’s not rocket science.

> Lecturers make you feel like they are essential when they probably aren’t - you can still pass the assessment without them. But it makes me feel less confident about my work.

3.1.4 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT VALUE

It was, however, unclear whether some of these comments about “academic value” expressed the view that, simply, it is good to have the textbooks that are required for a course, as in the comments above, or whether the comment reflected a more fundamental or generalised belief or principle about academic value, as in, for example,

> The textbooks are absolutely essential for understanding material.

> Textbooks help you to clarify your understanding.

> Textbooks do provide more valuable information than random online resources and it's more relevant to the lecture materials.

Twenty-nine respondents felt that textbooks were not value for money, explaining that they were high cost items that would only be used for a short period of time.

> I buy my textbooks online through book depository when they are available. As a theatre student, I am not willing to pay approximately $35 for a play text I will read only a few times when I can get a copy online for often under half the price.

> Some are just too expensive to justify buying them when you might only use it a little bit.

> Many Commerce courses rely on a text book for questions in tutorials. However, considering the price of textbooks and given I’m fourth year, I have realised it is not worth it. But I do forgo a better grade as I do not have access to all the resources.

> If the recommended textbook was bought, and the lecturer(s) hardly referenced the text book bought then I could of used that money for other means to help with study.

> A lot of the time books are considered "essential" but are really not and are rarely used. A lot of the time they would be better suits under the "recommended" umbrella as they are a good place to go in your study - but not necessarily essential to your success in a course.

> The number of times we actually get referred to a textbook or asked to read a chapter don’t make it worth the money it costs to buy a textbook. I got one in first year and I have looked at it once - apart from that everything else I need is online or I can get the same information in a different book

In responses to Q10, 47 comments from a total of 39 individual respondents identified affordability of textbooks as a key concern. Comments included those connected with finding textbooks expensive but still buying them; finding alternatives to new textbooks that were less satisfactory, such as older editions or high demand and course reserve Library copies; and choosing not to take courses because of the cost of textbooks. For example,

> I feel like I am putting my grades at risk because I refuse to pay such ridiculous prices for textbooks.

> The cost has effected [sic] negatively due to it leaving me no money for food, therefore I don't have the energy for studying.

> Because of the course reserve situation. Most assigned textbooks are on course reserve, and only being able to get a book out for an hour means not being able to go further than the library to read it and strangely, the library isn't always the most calming place to read a book. The library is more of a computer suite of students' personal computers, than a calming environment conducive to reading. Have you ever tried to read with 40 people typing away from every corner of the room?? Not pleasant.

Only one respondent contemplated, but did not action, withdrawing from a course because of the cost of the required textbook. Eleven other students reported that the cost of textbooks was a deciding factor when choosing their course of study. A typical comment was, "I can't afford to buy the textbook, so essentially I can't take the class."

Further connections can be made between the responses discussed above and the behaviours, attitudes about textbooks and their accessibility. These connections are discussed in the next section.

3.2 ACCESS BEHAVIOURS

The survey asked respondents to indicate their behaviours in relation to gaining access to textbooks, other than buying them. The specific questions on access behaviours in the survey included:

Q5 *Indicate how often you do the following in relation to required textbooks:*

- I buy my own print copy
- I buy or rent electronic copies
- I sell or give away textbooks once the course is finished
- I access required textbooks through the library
- I buy second-hand copies

followed by a free text comment Q6 *If you don't use library copies, what are the reasons why?*.

Q7 *What do you do if you don't buy your own copy of a required textbook?*

- I just do without
- I rely on other resources provided by my lecturer (e.g. on Blackboard or Library Course Reserve)
- I find other resources myself in the Library
- I use free, alternative online resources (e.g. Wikipedia, Khan Academy, Coursera)
- I borrow the textbook from a friend
- I copy from a friend's textbook
- I download from a filesharing site

followed by an open comment Q8 *Tell us about any other method you use not covered in the options above*.

Further comments were found in responses to Q36 *Do you have any other thoughts or comments to make that weren't covered in other questions? Please enter them here.*

3.2.1 THE ACCESSIBILITY OF RESOURCES

Forty-eight free text comments in response to Q6 and Q8 referred to accessibility of physical and online resources. Half of these comments identified a lack of text availability, including limited textbooks being available to borrow through the Library and available for purchase from bookstores. Examples of comments of this type included:

> Often there are not enough copies [of required textbooks] in the Library during exam times.

> …I am worried about the availability of the textbook I need. Particularly during exam time, I like to study from the book and need to know for sure that I can access it.

> Often they're on course reserve so I can't get them out (or not for very long) or there aren't enough copies. Sometimes it's because it's easier to have my own copy to highlight or make notes in. Plus I tend to be pretty rough on textbooks while studying!

> There are not enough copies in the course reserve. Sometimes it's easier to get a cheap copy on eBay etc.

While six students stated that the Library's online and physical resources met their academic needs, eight students asked for increased availability of online textbooks and e-resources

> Put more [of] the essential textbooks online!

> I would like to see an increase in the online availability of textbooks. In this day and age, it is so much more efficient to carry a laptop containing a number of books rather than the book itself. It also saves time when searching for key terms or topics.

3.2.2 BEHAVIOURS AS STUDENTS SEEK TO GAIN ACCESS

Insight into the various behaviours of respondents as they seek to gain access to textbooks is provided by the responses to Q5, presented in Figure H. This Likert-style question presented them with a five-point range from *never* to *always*.

Figure H: How often textbook access behaviours occur

Figure H shows that a reasonable number of respondents do still buy print copies, with 43% indicating that they do this either 'most of the time' or 'always'. Breaking purchase of books down by subject, using demographic subject

area data from Q17, showed broadly similar behaviour across the different disciplines. As for buying electronic copies, this is not (yet) particularly common, and would depend on availability: 72% said they 'never' or 'rarely' do this; only 7% said 'most of the time' or 'always'. Certainly this is far less common than buying print, either new or second-hand ('I buy my own print copy'; 'I buy second-hand copies'), or getting access through the Library ('I access required textbooks through the library'). In both these cases, results were similar, and indeed comparable to buying a print copy ('I buy my own print copy'), though purchase is still slightly more common.

Responses to Q7 are presented in Figure I, where respondents were asked to indicate what they did if they did not purchase their own copy of a required textbook.

Figure I: Textbook access behaviours other than buying

When they do not have the required textbook, respondents indicated that they rely very heavily on resources provided by lecturers, either through the LMS (e.g., Blackboard) or the Library course reserve service. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents indicated that they use these systems either 'always' or 'most of the time' when they do not buy a required textbook. Only 7% 'never' or 'rarely' used them. The following comments in response to Q36 provide some illustration:

> Blackboard has always been a great source for accessing links/readings put on my lecturers. In the past couple of years, I have found that a lot more readings have become accessible online which is very convenient!!!

> It's great having everything you need for course reading online through the Library. If every reading I had to do was done like that, it would make my life easier in terms of time management and for others, cost.

The next most common alternative to purchase of a required textbook is “free, alternative online resources,” with 48% of respondents indicating they do this ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’, with a further 29% doing this ‘sometimes’. ‘Doing without’ is relatively common, with just over a third (34%) indicating that they do this when not buying their own copy of the textbook. This would be of concern to most teachers.

> I think prices really influence students and if it's too expensive they're more likely to not buy it and rely on friends or just do without, and it of course reflects badly on grades.
>
> Would rather cover the material on free web sites or use friends text book.
>
> Too complicated [to search for Library resources of course reserve]. Would rather find the information online.
>
> Text books are cripplingly expensive and usually not worth the price and are debatable for their educational value which forces student into using alternative study aids. This will result in student relying on textbooks less in favour of more effective learning tools such as Google. Google is a far more valuable education tool, not to mention more cost effective.

For each of the questions already discussed about habits when they do not buy the textbook, respondents indicated relying on those habits more than seeking alternative resources in the library, where only 29% of respondents indicated doing this ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’. Even going without is slightly more common than finding alternative resources in the Library. Borrowing or copying from a friend was considerably less common; as was downloading from filesharing sites.

Some of the difficulties of using the library resources, seeking alternative ways to source textbooks and even difficulties when trying to purchase the textbook are illustrated in this comment:

> Textbooks are often very expensive, which increases the difficulty of access. There are sites online where you can buy them for much cheaper, but they take weeks to arrive - which then puts you behind the rest of the class. Library access is difficult at times, particularly if you live far from campus or they are kept in course reserve.

3.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In summary, the findings showed that:

- 43% of respondents buy required textbooks 'most of the time' or 'always' and 48% said they sell them with the same frequency. They are slightly more likely to buy a textbook than access it through the library.
- 20% said they spent nothing on required textbooks in the year of the survey and another 38% spent under $250; first and second year students tend to spend more than those in later years of study.
- About one-third (34%) said when they don't buy a required textbook; they just do without, despite a clear sense from many that they thought they were beneficial in academic terms. There is a very heavy reliance on materials provided by lecturers via the Learning Management System (77% utilising these ‘most of the time’ or ‘always’). They will seek alternative sources, indicating a preference for freely available online sources above library resources.
- Half of respondents indicated that they felt lack of access had had a negative effect on them academically. This was a result of them not having the textbook or not getting access through the library.
- Respondents tend not to factor the cost of textbooks into course selection, and it is rare for them to withdraw from a course because of the cost of a required textbook. However, they frequently feel textbooks reflect very poor value, which is considered not only in purely financial terms but also in terms of the value to the course as a whole.

4 DISCUSSION

This survey has shown that a significant number of respondents do feel negatively affected by lack of access to textbooks. The negative affects seem to be related to a number of different factors including perceptions of: cost versus value; access; and academic advantage.

4.1 KEY POINTS ARISING FROM THE STUDY

4.1.1 TEXTBOOK COST

This study found that the cost of textbooks does not seem to affect choice of course at all; this result is contrary to the Senack (2014) study. Possible reasons for this may include the existence of the course-related costs that are part of student loans in New Zealand, or that for many courses at the University of Otago, no information about required textbooks is provided before enrolment, a point which is discussed further, below. That limited information thus inhibits student ability to make decisions about course choice, based on textbook cost. Added to that, when Papers are compulsory parts of set programmes, students have little choice about withdrawing or not enrolling at all on the basis of textbook cost or accessibility, if they want to complete their qualification.

4.1.2 VALUE AND WORTH OF TEXTBOOKS

In this study, some students expressed a view that textbooks have limited "value" – value for money and/or academic value. Respondents reported purchasing expensive textbooks that were rarely referred to by lecturers and/or used for one Paper and no more. When the value of purchasing textbooks is brought into question by students, the resulting alternative resource-seeking behaviours as revealed by participants in this study, should be of concern to teachers. While information literacy skills are important for students to develop, the sourcing of high quality information as an alternative to set textbooks, is not straightforward. Students, especially in their first few years of university study, are not generally experienced and knowledgeable enough about a discipline area to be able to engage in the high level of information critique that is needed to inform choice and use of information through the alternative sources they find. Lecturers who select appropriate, accessible and affordable textbooks for their Papers may play a key role in facilitating positive academic outcomes for students and reducing the likelihood of students accessing inappropriate or inadequate alternative resources.

4.1.3 ALTERNATIVE ACCESS

Participants in this study reported that they do seek alternative resources and other ways to access textbooks when cost is considered a factor, despite the fact that many also saw the benefits of having access to their own textbooks that they had bought. Alternatively, many students also expressed the limited value (in terms of value for money), especially when they had experienced minimal direct need for textbooks they had bought in the past. Students reported relying heavily on alternatives to essential textbooks, particularly from lecturers. Taking the form of materials that lecturers provide access to via, for example, the learning management system, students also reported searching online for supplementary resources. While many also acknowledged the ability to access Library copies of textbooks, the limitations (including, availability, inability to make notes on the text, limited loan time) were highlighted. Student access to textbooks is restricted in the sense that (a) resources provided electronically rely on licensing that allows copying of this nature, that is, either resources must be openly licensed or they must be covered by a blanket copying licence or by library subscription; and (b) physical course reserves are, by their nature, limited to the vagaries of demand at peak times.

4.1.4 CURRICULUM DECISION MAKING

Another issue is related to course development and design: the decision-making involved in choosing which textbooks should be accessed and which textbooks are essential. Each lecturer will approach this differently; with many decisions being based on lecturers' views about education and textbooks and their place and role in courses, teaching and learning. This process can be unique to individual lecturers and so will vary from course to course. Students usually have minimal or no exposure to those decision making processes, and the only decision that they can make is to either follow the directions of the lecturer to buy the set textbooks, or to take it upon themselves not to buy the textbook and seek alternatives. Having said that, the consequence of not buying or having access to essential textbooks is a perception of the negative impact this has on academic performance. While this study is based on self-reports and therefore highlights expressed perceptions only, it is of concern if students view that their academic success is being impaired because of their inability to afford or have access to textbooks or that they struggle to cope without buying the text, only to sometimes buy it anyway because of difficulties in gaining easy access.

Questions such as "which textbooks", "how many", and "how are they to be used" are questions that teachers consider when they are designing and developing their courses. It is important that texts meet the needs for education as understood and perceived by lecturers, including their views about a textbook's place and role in courses, teaching and learning. However, curriculum decisions such as these, should also include consideration of other factors, such as "where are the textbooks from", "what is their cost", "where are they accessed" and "how are they accessed"? A pedagogical ideal about the place and value of textbooks needs to be moderated by the realities of the implementation of that ideal, meaning that course decision-making in relation to textbooks involves more people than only teachers. There are many constraints and barriers inherent within any complex university environment and broader student learning experience and context. Access and cost, along with institutional and related teaching, learning and support systems (e.g., Library, bookshop, internet access etc.) are some of the variables that need to be considered in the process of providing learning environments and experiences that are satisfying for students.

4.1.5 INSTITUTIONAL AND DEPARTMENTAL PRACTICES AT OTAGO

The course pack: In this study, "course packs" – or resources, including readings, tailored specifically for a course and then sold in (hard copy) "packs" to students – were not included within the definition of "textbooks". Though on the decline, the practice of selling course packs to students is well-known at the University, and could be viewed as one of the alternatives of textbooks. Course packs are a collection of resources assembled by lecturers to support teaching and learning, such as might be included as traditional handouts or copies of slideshow presentations. Access to such materials and resources should be an integral part of the learning in any course and not an "extra." As such, course packs are not a solution to the issues highlighted in relation to cost and access: they are simply textbook replacements and do cost students money, even if this is restricted to cost-recovery for printing. Access may be improved by the use of course packs but the cost factor remains. This was highlighted in the focus groups and also in one respondent's final comment: "Course readers should be covered by the cost of the paper, having to pay an extra sometimes upwards of $60+ is nye [sic] on impossible for some students."

Informing students: During the focus group discussions in the survey pilot phase of this study, and in some of the comments that were gathered later from survey respondents, it is clear that for many courses, information about required textbooks and their costs is not provided for students before enrolment. When that information is provided, it is not always easy to find. With the recent introduction of eVision at the University and the now uniform template[5] being used to display course and subject information, the amount

[5] http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/subjects/index.html

of detail provided about course requirements is improving. Currently, not all paper descriptions in that course information include details about textbooks and even where they do, cost is not usually included. In addition, variation in terminology, for example, the use of "required", "recommended", "essential", prompts different interpretation – as highlighted by various comments by respondents – as to which texts need to be purchased and which are highlighted simply because they are very useful.

Alternative avenues for access: Making sure that textbooks are of reasonable cost but also readily accessible and available – whether in hard copy or electronically – are considerations which could contribute to a more satisfying experience for students. The institution does acknowledge that textbooks and other resources should be made available for students in its *Provision of Course and Study Information to Enrolled Students Policy*[6], albeit it in a veiled way. In this survey, respondents highlighted high levels of reliance on materials other than textbooks, especially those provided via a Learning Management System. The Library offers two 'reserve' options: electronic and physical. The electronic system removes the cost factor but was an opt-in service at the time of the survey, so not utilised by all staff. The physical course reserve system, in which copies of hard copy textbooks are available for a short-term loan to students who have physical access in the Library, is a worthwhile facility, as recognised by some participants in this study. However, respondents also highlighted issues with the limited numbers of course reserve items, their high demand, the short-term borrowing limits and crowded and noisy library workspaces. For students who already find the cost of purchasing textbooks a problem, Library access is not an easy or even possible solution at times.

4.2 FINAL COMMENTS

This study suggests strongly that the position of students where textbook purchase is concerned needs to be acknowledged and recognised: their views and their contexts in terms of their financial situation and their perceptions of the monetary and academic value of textbooks. Some points for reflection on the key points arising from this study (section 4.1) are now made to provide a frame of reference for the Recommendations which appear in section 6.

The latest report from the PIRG (Senack & Donoghue, 2016) reports that students are going into debt because of the cost of textbooks. Those authors argue that the cost of textbooks should be reduced. However, the authors of the current study ask the question, is the traditional view of the textbook being the important resource that it has been perceived to be in the past, still viable? The content within a textbook may be invaluable, but the way it is presented and made accessible has changed and continues to change with ongoing developments in digital technologies. Teachers have a responsibility to acknowledge such changes and seek to understand the position of students within the changing university learning environment.

More specifically, it is important for lecturers and course designers to accept the changing nature of information provision. There is a wide variety of options available to source high quality resources to support courses, teaching and learning; options other than textbooks that are of high monetary cost to students and fraught with access difficulties. Granted, the introduction of different options for provision and access of resources for students is not necessarily straightforward. As Brown (2013) notes when commenting upon the use of e-textbooks (as one possibility of an alternative to hard copy textbooks), "Just because we can do something does not mean we should" (p.220).

Taking a different perspective is the Open Education Resources (OER) movement which, for many years, has involved discussion of issues that are directly and indirectly related to textbooks, as well as how academics, teaching and learning and higher education are perceived and framed (e.g., Oliver, 2015). OER textbooks are developed and created with a minimum of technical or copyright barriers to promote maximum access and customisation by students and teachers alike. While some institutions do actively promote the use of OERs,

[6] http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago601527.html Accessed 7 September 2016

because of the complexities surrounding open education and the need to take a critical approach (e.g., Bayne, Knox & Ross, 2015; Edwards, 2015), they have developed a whole-of-institution strategy (two Australian examples being, the University of Southern Queensland[7] and the University of Tasmania.[8] A similar approach with a different model is the whole-of-province BC campus OpenEd Project in British Columbia, through which they estimate between CA$1.6 – 2.0 million saved by students whose faculty have adopted open textbooks.[9] Understandably, taking a whole-of-institution perspective needs to be underpinned by an appreciation of the university context, of the wider OER environment and the nature of "open" in the broader sense. Specific research done in other places around the world (e.g., Chae & Jenkins, 2015; Fischer, Hilton, Robinson, & Wiley, 2015) can help to inform New Zealand and specific Otago environments of possibilities for, and limitations to, the incorporation of OERs at the University. This is especially as, in relation to the study in this report in particular, it has been shown that the use of OERs in courses can be of advantage to students (e.g., Hilton, 2016; de los Arcos et al., 2014; Pitt, 2015).

[7] https://www.usq.edu.au/open-practice/open-education/using-oer Accessed 7 September 2016.
[8] http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/content-and-resources/open-educational-resources Accessed 7 September 2016.
[9] https://open.bccampus.ca/ As at 7 September 2016, the website indicates 31 institutions have adopted 575 textbooks.

5 LIMITATIONS

Limitations of the part of the study reported here concern the survey instrument itself. As part of a larger investigation, the results of this pilot will contribute to the refinement of the survey instrument and the plans for widening participation in the survey to all students across the University. Provision of the survey instrument to other institutions across New Zealand and Australia would garner views from tertiary students across different tertiary institutional contexts and provide a broader understanding of textbook use within courses, and their impact on study behaviours and decisions.

The limitations of the survey instrument and the opportunities for further enhancement of the wider study are now presented. Finally, a series of recommendations are made.

The survey instrument should be refined to ensure that alternatives, options and wording increase the likelihood of meanings and intentions behind the questions matching those understood by respondents and that questions provide an appropriate and relevant scope and range of response possibilities. Some examples might include:

- the Likert-type questions should include a 'not applicable' option;
- additional options such as 'I really am not sure' or 'does not apply to me because I have always bought the texts' in Q9 *Has lack of access to textbooks had a negative effect on you academically?*, to broaden the range of possible ways to respond;
- in the 'Cost and Choosing Courses' section of the survey, a question asking whether there were no textbook costs, because in answer to Q1 *About how much did you spend on textbooks *this year* (print and electronic)?*, a response could have been '$0', but this may have been because the student enrolled in courses with no textbook costs.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented below highlight key areas for consideration and action. The three key areas relate to: the student voice; the effect of textbook cost and accessibility on study behaviours; and curriculum decision making and planning.

Recommendations are:

1. For the University:

a) Promote discussion of this study amongst staff and students
b) Clarify expectations about textbooks through a stocktake of course outlines
c) Determine the extent to which information about textbooks is readily available to support course choice and enrolment decisions
d) Report the alignment of course information on textbooks with policy
e) Report the alignment of access to text books with policy

2. For academic staff

a) Acknowledge students' views about textbooks, the insight these offer into study behaviours, and the impact on learning
b) Encourage the development of critical information seeking behaviours
c) Assess students' views on textbook affordability and accessibility within particular papers and programmes
d) Test your assumptions about textbooks, including their viability, place and role in courses, teaching and learning
e) Maximise Library services in the selection and use of resources, including textbooks.

3. For research

a) Administer this study to a wider group of students to provide a more comprehensive picture

b) Administer this study to a defined group of students during a review of a course or programme

c) Modify the survey instrument for use by other institutions

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – CATEGORY B ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

D15/121
Dr S Stein
Distance Learning
Room 417, 4th Floor
Commerce Building

Dear Dr Stein,

I am writing to confirm for you the status of your proposal entitled "**Access to and provision of textbooks: Student perceptions, experiences and behaviours**", which was originally received on May 1, 2015. The Human Ethics Committee's reference number for this proposal is **D15/121**.

The above application was Category B and had therefore been considered within the Department or School. The outcome was subsequently reviewed by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. The outcome of that consideration was that the proposal was approved.

Approval is for up to three years from the date of HOD approval. If this project has not been completed within three years of this date, re-approval must be requested. If the nature, consent, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise me in writing.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Gary Witte

Manager, Academic Committees

Tel: 479 8256

Email: gary.witte@otago.ac.nz

APPENDIX 2 – DETAILS ABOUT SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

The intention of the survey was to gather student views about their experiences of using core textbooks that have incurred cost and/or those available as open education resources. The survey questions focused on gathering views about accessing course textbooks, and the costs of those textbooks, specifically in terms of how students viewed those two factors as having an impact on their study behaviours as related to retention, persistence and attainment.

DRAFT SURVEY

The Senack (Senack, 2014) survey was adapted by the researchers to produce a first draft. Modifications included changes in language and use of terminology and the removal references to features of US tertiary contexts that were not meaningful in the New Zealand context.

The Draft Survey comprised a series of questions clustered around the following areas:

- Textbooks - cost and access in tertiary study
- What is a textbook?
- Cost and choosing courses
- How do you access required textbooks?
- Study and grades
- About your study

To ensure that the questions in the survey were understandable and relevant to the potential respondents, to check students' interpretation of the draft survey questions and to ensure that issues, as the students see them, were covered within the survey, the draft survey was "tested" with three focus groups of students drawn from the Class Representative (commonly called "Class Reps") group of 2015. Class Reps are students who have volunteered to represent their peers by providing feedback on each course or paper to the responsible teaching department. Volunteering to undertake the role of being a Class Rep is suggestive of a high level of engagement with study and a tendency towards responsibility and/or leadership. As less than five per cent of students become Class Reps in any one year, it is acknowledged that the students who participated in the focus groups were not necessarily representative of the broader student demographic. However, the selection of participants using purposive sampling (Palys, 2008) was undertaken because the assumed engagement of these students in study life and, as part of that, interest in the topic of the survey, meant that the nature of the feedback they were able to provide would be rich and relatively easy to gather.

FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT

An email invitation was sent to the Class Rep group (n=811), inviting them to be part of one of three Focus Group discussions. The students who volunteered came from across the broad discipline areas of the University, represented as Divisions (see Table 3.1). Relative to the total number of Health Sciences students who study at Otago, there were fewer Health Sciences students. This may be because many Health Sciences professional courses run their own class representative systems rather than using the main Otago University Students' Association system.

Table 1: Focus Group Participation

Session	No. Participants	Divisional Representation
1	11	Commerce 3, Health Sciences 3, Humanities 3, Sciences 7
2	6	Commerce 1, Health Sciences 1, Humanities 2, Sciences 3
3	8	Commerce 2, Health Sciences 1, Humanities 3, Sciences 2

* Participants could identify themselves as being from more than one discipline area.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PROCESS

Each group session was led by one of the researchers, while a second researcher observed and made written notes of the discussion. The following questions were used as prompts for the discussion:

For each section of the survey:

- Explain the purpose/intention, as you interpret it
- How easy or difficult was it to understand?
- Do you think other students will understand/be able to make sense of it?
- What are your suggestions for rewording and other changes?

About the overall survey:

- Is the survey too long?
- What sort of prize would incentivise it adequately? What do you think of the grocery voucher idea we have suggested?
- Do you think we need a space for extra comments, towards the end of the survey?
- Any other final comments or suggestions?

The focus group sessions provided useful feedback that enabled refinement of the survey instrument. One of the key outcomes of this process was arriving at a clear understanding of the meaning of 'required textbook.'

APPENDIX 3 - FINAL SURVEY

Textbooks - cost and access

Textbooks - cost and access in tertiary study (5-10 min.)

Does the cost of textbooks affect which courses you choose? Do you rely on the library having copies and not buy textbooks yourself? Do you feel that lack of access to textbooks affects your grades in those courses you do take? By clicking I understand below, you acknowledge that you understand that the data you provide will be used in our research and in results we publish about it.

We only ask your name to go into the prize draw and that your names are not connected to your answers.

Your answers will enter the public domain and we plan to make the anonymous data available online for others to analyse.

This project has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (project code D15/121).

(The questions in this survey are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution licence (4.0). This means questions can be copied, shared and adapted as long as you attribute the University of Otago and Otago University Students Association as the authors. Contact for this survey copyright@otago.ac.nz.)

What is a textbook?

For the purposes of this survey, think about textbooks that:

- are required as a set text;
- you have to pay for yourself or access through the library; and
- are either print or electronic.

Don't think about textbooks that are:

- optional; or
- copies in the form of
    - course readers; or
    - course packs.

Cost and choosing courses

Q1 About how much did you spend on textbooks *this year* (print and electronic)?

- ☐ $0 (1)
- ☐ $1 to $250 (2)
- ☐ $251 to $500 (3)
- ☐ $501 to $750 (4)
- ☐ $751 to $1000 (5)
- ☐ $1001 to $1250 (6)
- ☐ $1251 to $1500 (7)
- ☐ More than $1500 (8)
- ☐ I don't know (9)

Q2 Have you ever decided against taking a course because of the cost of textbooks?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ I don't know (3)

Answer If Have you ever decided against taking a course because of the cost of textbooks? *Yes* Is Selected

Q3 You answered that you have decided against taking a course because of the cost of textbooks. Tell us about that decision.

Q4 The cost of textbooks is a factor in deciding which courses I take

- ☐ Never (1)
- ☐ Rarely (2)
- ☐ Sometimes (3)
- ☐ Most of the Time (4)
- ☐ Always (5)
- ☐ I don't know (6)

How do you access required textbooks?

Q5 Indicate how often you do the following in relation to required textbooks

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Most of the Time (4)	Always (5)	I don't know (6)
I buy my own print copy (1)						
I buy or rent electronic copies (2)						
I sell or give away textbooks once the course is finished (3)						
I access required textbooks through the library (4)						

Q6 If you don't use library copies, what are the reasons why?

Study and grades

Q35 Which of the following statements best reflects your approach to study?

- ☐ I read all the readings listed by my lecturers and seek out further sources of information by myself (1)
- ☐ I read all the readings listed by my lecturers (2)
- ☐ I read required readings but not optional/further readings (3)
- ☐ I read only what I need to complete the assignments (4)
- ☐ I read the bare minimum (5)
- ☐ I don't read any readings (6)

Q7 What do you do if you don't buy your own copy of a required textbook?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Most of the Time (4)	Always (5)	I don't know (6)
I just do without (1)						
I rely on other resources provided by my lecturer (2)						
I find other readings by myself (3)						
I use free, alternative online resources (e.g. Wikipedia, Khan Academy, Coursera) (4)						
I borrow the textbook from a friend (5)						
I copy from a friend's textbook (6)	m	m	m	m	m	m
I download from a filesharing site (7)	m	m	m	m	m	m

Q8 Tell us about any other method you use not covered in the options above.

Q9 Has lack of access to textbooks had a negative effect on you academically?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Probably not (3)
- ☐ Definitely not (4)
- ☐ I don't know (5)

Answer If Has lack of access to textbooks had a negative effect on you academically? *Definitely yes* Is Selected Or Has lack of access to textbooks had a negative effect on you academically? *Probably yes* Is Selected

Q10 Please describe how you think lack of access to textbooks affected you academically.

About your study

Finally, please tell us some very general information about your study. We collect this information so that we can see if there are differences between different types of student, e.g. whether Health Sciences students do things differently to Commerce students or whether senior students are more likely to do certain things.

Q22 Which type of tertiary institution are/were you enrolled at? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ University (1)
- ☐ Polytechnic (2)
- ☐ Institute of Technology (3)
- ☐ Wananga (4)
- ☐ Other (5)

Answer If Which type of tertiary institution are/were you enrolled at? (Check all that apply) *Other* Is Selected

Q23 Please describe the type of institution

Q24 Name of institution(s)?

Q25 How many years of tertiary study have you done (including your current year)?

- ☐ 1 (1)
- ☐ 2 (2)
- ☐ 3 (3)
- ☐ 4 (4)
- ☐ 5 or more (5)

Q26 Your gender

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Other (please enter text below) (3)

Answer If Your gender *Other* Is Selected

Q27 Click to write the question text

Q28 Your subject area(s)

- ☐ Commerce / Business (1)
- ☐ Health Sciences (2)
- ☐ Humanities (3)
- ☐ Sciences (4)
- ☐ Other (5)

Answer If Your subject area(s) *Other* Is Selected

Q29 Please describe your Other subject area(s)

Q30 How you study

- ☐ On campus (1)
- ☐ Distance (2)
- ☐ Mix of on campus and distance (3)

Q31 Do you have a disability that affects your study?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q32 Are you a native speaker of English?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q33 What is your ethnicity? (Choose up to three)

- ☐ NZ European / Pākehā (1)
- ☐ Māori (2)
- ☐ Samoan (3)
- ☐ Cook Islands Māori (4)
- ☐ Tongan (5)
- ☐ Niuean (6)
- ☐ Tokelaun (7)
- ☐ Fijian (8)
- ☐ Other Pasific Peoples (9)
- ☐ British / Irish (10)
- ☐ Dutch (11)
- ☐ Greek (12)
- ☐ Polish (13)
- ☐ South Slav (14)
- ☐ Italian (15)
- ☐ German (16)
- ☐ Australian (17)
- ☐ Other European (18)
- ☐ Filipino (19)
- ☐ Cambodian (20)
- ☐ Vietnamese (21)
- ☐ Other Southeast Asian (22)
- ☐ Chinese (23)
- ☐ Indian (24)
- ☐ Sri Lankan (25)
- ☐ Japanese (26)
- ☐ Korean (27)
- ☐ Other Asian (28)
- ☐ Middle Eastern (29)
- ☐ Latin American (30)
- ☐ African (31)
- ☐ Other (32)

Q34 Thank you very much. If you would like to go into the prize draw please provide your name and a contact number below. These details will be deleted from the data used when we analyse all the responses.

APPENDIX 4 – RESULTS: RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

YEARS OF TERTIARY STUDY

Weighted towards first and second year of study – with just over half of respondents. But a reasonable spread.

How many years of tertiary study have you done (including your current year)?

Years	Responses
1	71
2	57
3	45
4	38
5 or more	22
Grand Total	**233**

GENDER

Much higher response rate from females. 3 did not respond.

SUBJECT AREAS

Respondents could indicate more than one area of study, as it is common for our students to combine different degrees. The following chart includes 303 subject areas indicated by respondents.

96 of the 233 (41%) chose to 'further define' their area of study by indicating a major subject or specialist discipline (such as Law or Education under Humanities).

MODE OF STUDY

Almost all students study on campus, with a small number indicating both on campus and distance study; only 1 was solely a distance student.

Mode	Count
Distance	1
Mix of on campus and distance	17
On campus	215
Total	**233**

DISABILITY THAT AFFECTS STUDY

21 respondents (9%) indicated that they had a disability that affects their study.

NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH

18 respondents (8%) indicated that they were not native speakers of English.

ETHNICITY

Respondents included 16 Maori (6.7%), 8 Pacific (3.3%)

APPENDIX 5 – FREE TEXT COMMENTS ANALYSIS: CODES, THEMES, SCOPE

Q3. Comments on decision against taking a course or withdrawing from one because of the cost of textbooks

- Affordability
- Strategic: select papers on cost
- VFM: Text not value for money
- Issue with library service

Q6. Comments on reasons for not using library copies of textbooks

- Preference to use own or others copies
- Need to annotate
- Format, size, online
- Issue with Library service
- Preference to use elsewhere, like at home
- Anxiety / Attitude

Q8. Other methods to access textbook if don't buy

- Some comments can be covered by the categories e.g.,: course reserve, go without, YouTube, google, alternative sources
- Scan / or photocopy, perhaps only not covered.

Q10. More about response to "has lack of access to textbooks ever had a negative effect on you academically?"

- Recognise value from using textbooks
- Alternatives (e.g. other editions) not as good
- Availability an issue, UBS or Library
- Affordability
- Format, size, online
- Anxiety / Attitude

Q23. Other comments

- VFM: Text not value for money
- Lecturers practice: not initially aware of cost
- Request for online access
- Affordability
- Library service meets needs
- Library service does not meet needs
- Recognise cost of textbooks an issue