



Zero Cost and Low Cost Designations in the Schedule FAQ

As a result of California Senate Bill 1359, each campus of the California Community Colleges and the California State University shall “Clearly highlight, by means that may include a symbol or logo in a conspicuous place on the online campus course schedule, the courses that exclusively use digital course materials that are free of charge to students and may have a low-cost option for print version.” In our online schedule, Mt. SAC has Zero Cost and Low Cost designations:

- Mt. SAC uses the section course attribute **Zero Cost** to designate the course has \$0 required costs.
- Mt. SAC uses the section course attribute **Low Cost** to designate the course has \$40 or less in required costs.

Included in the course materials cost: traditional and electronic books or access codes, course packets, art supplies, subscriptions, safety equipment, field trip expenses, and anything else that is required by the instructor. This does not include standard school supplies that students need to purchase such as scantrons, pencils, and paper.

Optional costs should not be included in your calculation.

For example: you provide students with a link to a free, online version of your materials but give them the option to purchase materials in print. The cost of optional print materials should not be included in your calculation. However, if the print version is required in your class, you should include that cost in your calculation.

If a text is used across multiple courses in a sequence DO NOT base your calculation on the cost divided by those courses.

For example, a text that costs \$120 that is required for 3 sequenced courses DOES NOT meet the \$40 or under label requirement.

- Not all students take all courses in a series.
- Students may take courses over time and may have to pay for edition changes.
- Students must pay the \$120 and cannot budget for 3 even payments.

Only identify courses that meet these cost-cap requirements (Currently \$0 for Zero Cost, \$40 for Low Cost).

By default, classes that do not meet the cost cap will not be designated. Faculty must request the designation by submitting a Smartsheet (link forthcoming) for each Course Prep. All other courses will remain unmarked by default.

Q: What if I am using a rental textbook?

If a textbook is available as a rental (physical or digital) for less than \$40 at the Mt. SAC Bookstore, it qualifies for the Low Cost Designation.

Q: What if my text is available as an e-book through the Library?

If your required text is available as a free-to-students eBook through the Library AND is licensed as "unlimited simultaneous access", your course can qualify for the \$0 cost designation if you don't require the printed text in your class.

Q: What if I don't require any texts or "outside" materials for my class?

Your course CAN qualify for the \$0 designation if no "outside" materials or texts are required. For the purposes of these cost designations, it doesn't matter if you are using instructor-created materials, activities, slides, websites, library materials, etc. Apply the question: does my course have any text or publisher-related costs? If the answer is no, the course meets the Zero Cost designation.

Q: What if I am unsure about the cost of my materials?

Consult the Bookstore textbook manager for guidance on total cost. If you are still unsure about whether your course meets the designation at the registration deadline, DO NOT ask your Division Administrator to designate your course.

Q: If the instructor for the section is changed just prior to the beginning of the term, and the previously assigned instructor indicated that the course section was Zero Cost, is the new instructor bound by the original designation?

No, the new instructor is not bound by the original designation, but they do need to coordinate with their department scheduler/coordinator to ensure that the Zero Cost attribute is removed in a timely manner if they do not choose to use zero cost materials.

Q: What if there is no instructor assigned to a course section at the time the course schedule is published?

If no instructor is assigned to a course, the Zero Cost designation should not be used unless it is a departmental decision for course materials in multi-section courses.

Q: What if a course requires students to purchase materials other than textbooks, for example, art supplies, museum theater tickets, etc.?

The Zero Cost designation cannot be used if students are required to purchase any materials. If the overall cost for required materials is less than \$40, it qualifies for the Low Cost designation.

Q: What if I have copyright questions?

If you have copyright questions regarding any of your materials you use in class, consult the Library Guide [“Copyright for Instructional Materials.”](#)



Created by Mt. SAC Textbook and Instructional Materials Committee based on “ZCCM Material Costs in the Schedule FAQ” by [CSUDH AL\\$ Steering Committee](#), a derivative of “Material costs in the schedule FAQ” created by [PCC OER Steering Committee](#)