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Textbook Liberation Fund Grant Application Instructions & FAQ

About Skyepack

Skyepack helps college faculty members, departments and universities break free from the traditional textbook ecosystem. Traditional textbook publishers have increased the price of texts to unsustainable levels. Publishers are able to keep book prices high through unfriendly practices such as releasing new editions every 2-3 years with little changes to content, and bundling the textbook with software required for students to complete homework. These practices hurt students and constrain faculty members.

Skyepack works directly with faculty members to create fairly-priced custom course packages delivered to students through the Skyepack web+mobile platform. To create these custom course packages, we leverage open source content, content the faculty member has already created, inexpensive content licensed from third parties, and content created by Skyepack's instructional designers. Our goal is to make the transition from the "textbook ecosystem" to fairly-priced course content simple and efficient for all faculty members.

Our efforts, and the goals of the Textbook Liberation Fund, are guided by two principle beliefs:

1. We believe that every student deserves fairly priced course materials.
2. We believe that every faculty member deserves the freedom to use course materials that are best suited to the unique needs of their course, students, and teaching practices.

About the Textbook Liberation Fund

The Textbook Liberation Fund was created to provide financial assistance to faculty members pursuing, or interested in pursuing, a course materials cost reduction project (“Project”). Applications will be accepted in 3-4 application rounds each year, with grant awardees from each application round moving through their Projects from development to launch as a group or cohort (“Cohort”).

\$500,000 is available for disbursement over the lifetime of the Textbook Liberation Fund, with individual project grant awards varying in size based on multiple factors including, but not limited to:

- The number of faculty members involved in the Project
- The scope of the Project
- The amount of effort required for the Project
- The potential impact of the Project to student savings

How to Apply

To apply to the Textbook Liberation Fund, submit your application (template available on the Skyepack website) via email to grants@skyepack.com in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

The application process will follow the timeline shown below:

1. Application Phase: Applications will be accepted for each Cohort beginning on the Application Open Date through the Application Deadline.
2. Application Review: Applications will be reviewed by Skyepack personnel, higher education teaching & learning professionals, and subject matter experts, and assessed for Project feasibility, scope, and potential impact to student savings. Applications will be reviewed as they are received on a rolling basis.
3. Clarification Phase: After initial review, grant candidates may be contacted to discuss their application and answer any clarifying questions from the reviewers.
4. Pre-Award Phase: After clarifying questions have been sufficiently addressed (if any) grant candidates will be contacted to discuss the Project logistics, determine a Project timeline, and receive notification of the size and disbursement methods of the grant available for their Project.
5. Award Phase: Grantees will work with Skyepack to fulfill project requirements as determined in the Pre-Award Phase.

Working with Skyepack

A typical engagement begins with Skyepack's instructional designers meeting with the faculty member to understand their course learning objectives, the demographics of the student population, the assessment strategies, and individual teaching methodologies and practices. Skyepack then sources course content from open educational resources, content the instructor has already created (or is going to create), low-cost content licensed from third parties, and content custom created by Skyepack personnel. Depending on the unique needs of the Project, Skyepack offers the following services (and many others) to grant awardees:

- Sourcing, review, and curriculum mapping for course content.
- Assessment question bank development
- Audio and video recording & production services
- Interactive presentation development using tools like Adobe Captivate
- Image and graphic sourcing and creation
- Copyediting and peer review facilitation for faculty-authored content
- Assistance in course format changes (face-to-face, blended, online)

Throughout the process, the faculty member grantee is always in the driver's seat. We believe YOU are the best expert in YOUR course, and our role is to simplify the process and build a set of custom course materials that is a perfect fit for YOUR course.

Students will access their course content through the Skyepack web+mobile platform, which can be embedded into most Learning Management Systems, if desired. A technology access fee paid directly by the students (or in some cases by the institution) will be determined during the Pre-Award Phase. We anticipate that this technology fee will be approximately \$20 for most projects awarded grant funds.

Frequently Asked Questions

How are applications reviewed? Are there any criteria that automatically qualify or disqualify an application?

Grant applications are reviewed by Skyepack personnel, higher education teaching & learning professionals, and subject matter experts. Each Application is assessed for feasibility, scope, and the potential impact to overall student savings. Applications are reviewed in a holistic manner, and there is no single criteria that automatically qualifies or disqualifies an application.

Can I talk to the reviewers before I submit my application?

Reviewer's identities and their individual comments are kept confidential. However, grant administrators will be happy to discuss your application and provide high level feedback before you submit. You can contact a grant administrator at any time via email at grants@skyepack.com. We will not be able to provide an indication of probability of award for any specific application.

After the review is completed, we will either a) contact the grant candidate and provide a list of questions asked by reviewers for clarification during the Clarification Phase, or, b) notify the faculty member that their application was not accepted for award, and include notes and comments from the reviewers regarding how to strengthen the application should they choose to reapply in the future.

Is my application confidential?

Your application will only be shared with the grant administrators and reviewers in the Application Review and Clarification Phases. In the Pre-Award Phase, your application may be shared with Skyepack instructional designers or other Skyepack personnel in order to determine the Project timeline and logistics. Your application will never be shared publically or with other faculty members applying for grant funding.

How (and when) are grant funds disbursed?

Grant funds can be disbursed directly to faculty members, their departments, their institutions, or a combination of these via check or wire transfer.

The award amount and disbursement schedule are determined during the Pre-Award Phase. Each Project is unique and thus there is no standard disbursement schedule. The disbursement schedule may include some or all of the following: Disbursement at the beginning of the Project, disbursement at pre-determined milestones during the Project, disbursement at the completion of the Project prior to the launch of the course, and disbursement after the launch of the course.

We will work with each candidate during the Pre-Award Phase to determine a disbursement schedule that meets their needs.

If I create content for my course, do I retain ownership of the intellectual property?

Skyepack does not take ownership of any content created by faculty members. Intellectual property ownership is determined by the intellectual property policies at your institution.

Is the Skyepack content delivery platform accessible for students with disabilities?

Yes, the Skyepack platform is designed to be accessible to students using screen readers, keyboard navigation, and text-based alternatives to audio content. Skyepack's VPAT can be viewed at the following website: <http://www.skyepack.com/accessibility/vpat.html>

Can multiple faculty members apply for grant funding jointly?

Yes, awarded grants will be split among joint applicants in a manner agreed upon in the Pre-Award Phase.

Can I apply for multiple courses?

Yes, if you teach multiple courses you may apply for multiple courses in the same Cohort. Please submit a unique application for each course. However, if you teach the same course at multiple institutions, you will be eligible for one application for that course.

If I do not receive grant funding, can I re-apply in future rounds?

Yes, if you are not awarded a grant under this application, you are invited to re-apply to future rounds. Reviewer comments and suggestions will be provided for grant applications not accepted for an award. We will be happy to provide suggestions, where applicable, to strengthen your application. Simply resubmitting a new application with little or no modification will likely not have a high probability of being accepted in future rounds.

If I do not receive grant funding, can I still work with Skyepack to help my students save money?

We applaud your efforts to help your students save money on course materials. Not being awarded a grant may just mean that your Project wasn't the correct fit for the Textbook Liberation Fund. We will be happy to discuss other ways that we could potentially work with you. Please send an email inquiry to contact@skyepack.com

Can I ask questions about the application process, the textbook liberation fund, Skyepack, etc.?

Yes, we are happy to address any questions you may have. Please email questions to grants@skyepack.com. To give us an appropriate amount of time to respond, please submit any questions at least one week prior to the application deadline.