

NJIT Guidelines for Third-Party Material in Course Design and Delivery

The guidelines outlined below are based on three rationales: Copyright Policy, NJIT Learning Experience/Student Expectations, and Best Practice.

Copyright Policy

When selecting course materials, instructors must abide by copyright laws as well as model academic integrity for students by giving proper credit to all sources. Some materials are available for public consumption, such as YouTube videos and content on Creative Commons, though some [restrictions and precautions still apply](#). Other copyrighted material can be shared in small portions under fair use guidelines. Publisher material may be leveraged as long as it accompanies the **required** textbook for that semester. Publisher materials from other textbooks that are not required for purchase by the students may not be used. The [Van Houten library staff](#) is a valuable resource for questions about copyright and fair use for course materials.

NJIT Learning Experience/Student Expectations

Students taking courses at NJIT expect to benefit from the expertise, knowledge, and experience of their instructors. They should receive and experience an education that is aligned with NJIT's reputation as well as the cost of tuition. As such, instructors should be central to the student learning experience as opposed to offering an entire course consisting of publisher material re-packaged into the LMS. If the course content consistently directs them to other sources or materials prepared by third parties, students are not benefiting from their instructor's knowledge, and are not having a learning experience commensurate with the cost of tuition. This is especially important for online programs where the students do not benefit from in-person learning experiences. Such negative experiences will call into question the value of an NJIT degree.

Best Practice

All NJIT programs and courses include learning outcomes by our own choice as well as to satisfy accreditation. Courses should be strategically designed to best help students achieve those outcomes; courses should not be designed to teach through a single textbook or resource. Textbooks and other resources should be selectively chosen to support instructor-created learning content that is aligned to course and program outcomes. This includes original lecture content and thoughtful assessments. In addition, by creating original course materials rather than working through a textbook, instructors can ensure that their course materials are inclusive, timely, easily updated, accessible, and draw from a diverse selection of resources presenting multiple perspectives. In contrast, when course materials are dependent on publisher content, and new textbooks and/or new editions are required/assigned, course materials can become out of date, unusable, and/or difficult to update.

Guidelines

In general, all external resources that are considered "texts" must be preceded by original instructor content that richly contextualizes how outside materials are being deployed to meet specific course learning outcomes, even at the expository level.

Third-Party Resources

- All third-party resources should be carefully vetted and accurately cited before being added to a course. This includes verifying the source and copyright allowances for the material (e.g., anyone can upload a video to YouTube. Check the creator to ensure that they are the true owner of the material).
- The copyright provision for [audio/video materials](#) is not the same for face-to-face vs. online courses. Instructors should contact [NJIT librarians](#) for support if it is unclear whether or not this content can be fairly used.
- When applicable, instructors are encouraged to include [OER materials](#).

Scanned/Photocopied Materials

- Some copyrighted learning materials can be used under the condition of fair use, but those materials must be in compliance with the [TEACH Act](#).
 - Photocopied and scanned materials are often inaccessible and not screen-reader friendly. It is recommended that texts designed for digital consumption are used instead.

Publisher Materials

- **Publisher slides:** It is recommended that slides provided by the publisher to accompany the textbook are supplemental only, especially in online classes where lectures are recorded to be reused in future semesters. Lecture content, including slides, should be original and designed to meet learning outcomes, rather than structuring lectures around a textbook.
- **Publisher Question Banks:** Publisher question banks for quizzes/exams should only be used for low stakes formative assessment. Original and preferably [authentic assessments](#) are recommended for midterms, finals, and high stakes summative assessment. Publisher materials inevitably get posted to sites like Chegg and Course Hero which increases opportunities for academic integrity violations and diminishes the rigor and value of the learning experience. Instructors are encouraged to check, with a quick Google search, how much of the course assessment content is available online. If question banks must be used, consider re-envisioning the exam in a different way (open book, as study material, etc.), and/or (even for small exams) apply proctoring and strict time limits (strategies can be found in the [academic integrity guidelines for exams](#)).
- **Publisher Discussion Questions/Activities:** When asking students to complete discussion questions or activities from the textbook, be sure to properly attribute the source material for the questions. For example, if you are embedding these questions or activities into a Canvas page, let students know they can also find these questions in the textbook at the end of the chapter, or on a specific page. Additionally, because publisher materials are used in classes nation-wide, and are not unique to your course or even NJIT, these materials have a much higher chance of being available to students, with sample answers, on sites like Chegg and Course Hero. It is recommended that you

make original revisions to the assignment in order to better leverage the publisher materials. For example, if you want students to answer a discussion question at the end of a textbook chapter, you might ask them to make connections to their personal experience or current events as part of their response. Alternatively, you could assign an additional article as a second reading for that week, and ask students to synthesize both readings as part of their response. Leveraging these materials should be done with the intention to facilitate student achievement of learning outcomes and tie these materials/activities together to prepare students for summative assessments.

For support applying any of the guidelines listed above, instructors should reach out to the Office of Online Programs and schedule a consultation with an Instructional Designer.