

Affordability Questionnaire for Instructors, Course Coordinators, Chairs, and Heads

How affordable are your classes? This question is important but often difficult to answer. There are many factors that impact if a student can afford to complete a class or program. Affordability is directly related to student outcomes such as course completion and time to degree. By answering a few questions about your classes, you can picture the challenges faced by your students and develop opportunities to help them.

Answer each question. If you are unsure of an answer, consider asking the students in your class for their experiences. Not all questions may apply to your course.

Tuition

1. How much is the part-time tuition price for your class? To calculate, multiply the number of credit hours by the [annual rate](#). *For 2021-22, this cost is \$1,708.65 for three-credit undergraduate courses.*
2. How much do students save by taking your class as one of 5 full-time classes? To calculate, divide the [full-time in-state tuition](#) by 15. *For 2021-22, this cost is \$1437.60 for three-credit undergraduate courses; or a savings of \$271.05 over part-time rates.*
3. Does your program or course require [any extra fees](#)? These include classroom, laboratory, equipment, or technology fees. This particularly applies to programs in Business, Engineering, and Education.

Costs of Attendance

1. If your class is on a Rowan University campus, how much is a [semester parking pass](#) for the lots nearest you? Are there any free parking spaces in your area? How readily available are they for students?
2. Do you have commuters in your class? If a commuter drives an average of 20 miles per class (or uses 1 gallon per session), how much will it cost them in gas money? *For most commuters, this is about \$90/class/semester.*
3. Are there any entrance or exit exams associated with your program or class? What about state/national tests requirements? How much do they cost? Are students likely to take exams multiple times?
4. Are there any costs associated with students attending conferences, professional organizational meetings?
5. Do you have any parents who need child-care in your class? How much does childcare cost for the duration of your class period? *NJ.com anticipates the average cost per hour of childcare in Gloucester County is \$15.88.*

Course Materials

1. Do you require a physical or digital textbook for your class? Based on the [B&N website](#), how much does that book cost in various conditions (new, used, rented)? Are cheaper options available on other websites?

2. Did you make your textbook available for free anywhere on campus (such as [Library Course Reserves](#)) or online? How do you communicate this availability with students?
3. Do you require students to purchase digital access to online resources? How much does this cost? Do students gain or lose access to it on a certain date?
4. What other resources are students expected to pay for over the semester? Field trips? Equipment? Printing? Are these expenses standard across all students or personalized based on their work? Are these expenses communicated and predicted at the beginning of the semester?

Scholarships, Grants, and other Funding Opportunities

1. Does your college or department offer scholarships to students? What percentage of students receive them? How much does the average student receive?
2. How does your college or department communicate funding opportunities with students? Are current communication strategies effective?
3. Do you share other funding sources (such as industry opportunities) with students? How do you communicate these?

Considerations for Departments and Colleges

1. How do the financial costs associated with your program connect to the program's missions and vision? Any gaps? Disconnects?
2. If a student is unable to afford a class-related fee, what resources are available to help?
3. Is there a clearly-identified person who students can turn to for help or for questions about affordability in your program?
4. How are instructors supported when making affordability-minded changes to courses?
5. Are financially at-risk students identified early enough to provide resources and assistance that can change their success? What processes or strategies does your program use to identify students who may need additional financial support?
6. How does your program define "affordability" or "adequate financial support?"

Interpreting your results

Now that you've completed your audit, here are a few steps you can take to interpret the results and use them for meaningful reflection on the costs associated with your class or program.

1. Share your results. Meet with other instructors to discuss how your costs compare to each other. Are there ways to reduce costs such as sharing a textbook across sequential courses?
2. Look for opportunities to reduce costs. For example, consider helping students find cheaper textbooks or working with the publisher to reduce the cost of digital access fees.
3. Communicate early and effectively. Share information with students so they can plan on upcoming costs or deadlines early or before the semester.
4. Analyze your results using the resources below:

Tuition

Because tuition is set by the University, it is difficult to control this cost as an instructor. However, you can help communicate ways students can reduce their tuition.

1. Add FAFSA or university scholarship [deadlines](#) to your syllabus or Canvas so students remember to apply for financial aid.
2. Encourage students to use "[15 to Finish](#)" which maximizes their savings and reduces the time to degree.
3. Flag students in [RSN \(Starfish\)](#) who are at risk of failing or needing to repeat the class early in the semester.

Costs of Attendance

Again, these are often outside your control, but there are some ways you can help students anticipate these costs.

1. Help students anticipate the costs of exit or industry exams required by your program. Post information about them on Canvas or go over them in class.
2. Discuss parking with students when reviewing the syllabus. Explain the costs of nearby lots. Encourage students to move their cars during the mid-class break during 3-hour classes if using non-Rowan parking garages with free-parking windows.
3. Give students time to meet with other commuters to see if there are ways to carpool.
4. Share information about [reduced-cost and free](#) childcare options.
5. Provide contact information for [emergency funds](#) distributed through the Dean of Students.

Course Materials

The cost of course materials can change each semester. Re-assess these costs often.

1. Consider switching to an [Open Educational Resource](#) (OER) or create your own class materials using a [TAP Grant](#).

2. Place a copy of your materials on the [Library Course Reserves](#) and communicate availability with the class.
3. Contact the publisher of textbooks or digital resources to request a reduction in cost or alternative access method. Many publishers are willing to work with instructors to reduce the costs of individual items.
4. Submit your book order to the [bookstore](#) as early as possible so that it can request used copies of the textbook for students.
5. Communicate expenses early in the semester or even before the semester begins. Contact your students as early as possible and give specific predictions about the cost of materials.

Scholarships, Grants, and other Funding Opportunities

The primary way students reduce the costs of tuition are through scholarships, grants, and other funding sources. Becoming an active part of this process for your students can help encourage them to take advantage of these opportunities.

1. Publicize dates for industry, college, or department deadlines in your syllabus and on Canvas.
2. Readily offer students letters of recommendation if you believe they specifically fit an opportunity.
3. Ask students to let you know if they are looking for funding so you can help them search or refer them when an opportunity arises.

Considerations for Departments and Colleges

Work with your department or college to develop strategies that might help students who need additional financial assistance.

1. Consider adding the Rowan University [syllabus statement on affordability](#).
2. Familiarize yourself with University resources through the [ProfCents](#) website.
3. Designate someone in the department or college who instructors can turn to or refer students to with affordability concerns. Or, ensure all instructors are familiar with the Dean of Students [referral process](#).
4. Offer instructor support when making affordability-minded changes. Consider spotlighting faculty in college-wide publications, hosting affordability workshops, or sharing opportunities.
5. Finally, as affordability is a key part of Rowan's commitment to access and student success, getting student input into class and program costs is key. Consider working with student organizations for feedback on the costs of your program or to produce impactful solutions to student concerns.