

WHAT'S UP

With Buyback?

A university education doesn't come cheap these days, and that includes the price of textbooks. To help make textbooks more affordable for students, the bookstore tries to stock as many reduced-price used books as possible. Where does the store get used copies? Mainly from university students like you who no longer need their books.

Buying back used books benefits student in two ways. Students get money for books they don't want any more, and they are ensured there will be a supply of used books for the next term.

But students may be unhappy with the amount of money they receive for their used books. And they're even less happy if the store is unable to buy back certain books. Here are some students' most frequently asked questions about buyback and the answers.

Why do I get more for some books than others at buyback?

The value of a used book depends on whether that particular book is going to be assigned by an instructor for the next term. Books that are going to be used on this campus next term generally have a higher value than books that will be sent to wholesalers for resale elsewhere.

If the bookstore receives an order from an instructor that the book will be assigned again next term on this campus, then the store will be able to pay a higher value for that book, possibly as much as half the price of a new book.

If the book is not going to be assigned on this campus next term, the bookstore will check with the wholesale book companies to find out the national market value for the book. Wholesalers buy used books that will be resold for use on other campuses across the country. The national market value, which is set by the wholesalers, not the bookstore, is often a much smaller percentage of the original retail price. That's because the wholesaler must add in the cost of shipping and other normal business expenses to the resale price.

Why did my friend get more for the same book than I got?

The national market value for a particular book may fluctuate a lot, based on the changing supply and demand for that book nationwide.

If your friend received a higher value from the store and you got the lower national market value, then it was probably a matter of timing. The store may have already reached its campus quota (based on projected class enrollment for the next term) by the time you brought your book in.

Or, if you sold your copy before your friend, the store may not have received the instructor's book order yet and therefore could only offer the lower national market value at that time. The store cannot buy back books for resale on this campus until the instructor sends in his or her book order for the next term.

The store won't buy back some books. I bought these books just a couple of months ago. How can they be worthless now?

There are many reasons why a book might be turned down for buyback. The store and/or the wholesaler may have reached quota. Possibly the book is not being used anywhere next term, particularly if it is highly specialized or customized. The publisher may be replacing the book with a new, updated edition next term. The book may be part of a required package of items that cannot be sold separately. Your copy may not be salable due to a broken cover, missing or torn pages, excessive highlighting or marking, offensive marks, stains, water damage, or missing CDs.

I paid a lot of money for my books. Why doesn't the store give me more for them? Used books are provided by the bookstore as a less expensive alternative for students. Paying more at buyback means the store would have to raise the retail prices of used books.

Why doesn't the store sell used books for the same price that they were bought at buyback?

The store must add an amount to the price of all merchandise-including used books-to help cover the store's normal operating expenses, such as staff wages and benefits; rent payments; electricity, heat, water, and air conditioning; insurance and taxes; checkout systems; shelving; security; cleaning and repairs; supplies; and other expenses.

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