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In North America, through government and provincial investment, the use of openly licensed academic textbooks has gained traction within colleges and universities primarily to address high book prices and mounting student debt (1, 2). In Poland, the worlds first open textbook programme was established in 2016 as supported by the Ministry of Education to provide quality educational materials in schools (3). These texts are peer-reviewed course books licensed under open copyright licenses and made available online for free, or by print on-demand at low cost to students.

US research demonstrates the need for such interventions. In a 2012 Florida survey, 31% of students chose not to take certain courses because of high prices of recommended texts (4). In the UK, rising student debt as a result of higher fees is becoming an established phenomenon, and in a National Union of Student survey in 2015, 77% of graduates responding claimed to be worried about their levels of debt, with many stating their degrees were not worth the cost of tuition fees (5). In a newly funded project by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the UK Open Textbook Project (6) is exploring the introduction of open textbooks within UK higher education and how relevant this is in the digital age of material abundance. The project aims to identify who the relevant stakeholders in textbook selection or so-called 'adoption'. Text books such as those available by OpenStax.org and BCcampus.ca are available in multiple digital formats and provide accessible learning resources to academic programme teams and students. Textbooks are available in a range of core subjects including biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics. Studies are showing how the use of open textbooks as a replacement to commercial texts are well received by staff and students, with feelings that the books were more up to date, allowed for flexibility in delivery and provided accessible content to meet learner needs (7).

Part of the UK Open Textbook Project aims to fully understand current patterns of textbook use in the UK, and levels of awareness and understanding of what open textbooks are by academic staff and students. The aim of this abstract is to present the results of a questionnaire which addresses these areas.

Ethical approval was gained at the host institution in order to survey UK teaching staff and students. A validated questionnaire containing multiple question types was distributed via the project website and social media in 2017. The results of the questionnaire provide insight into levels of awareness of open textbooks, and what is understood by the term 'open'. Patterns of textbook use, distribution and purchasing habits are also explored in order to provide a firm basis for the introduction of open texts into higher education curricula. The benefits of open

textbooks are viewed not simply as a means of reducing study prices for students, but able enhance pedagogic approaches. This research will discuss findings in relation to emerging literature that shows the benefits of open textbooks can include the remixing of content and drawing together different elements to create bespoke course materials (8), and how better access to quality teaching resources can promote better progression and learner outcomes (9).

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