

# Book Contract Suppliers Overview For Study Associations



Book Contract Committee 2022-2023  
09-01-2023

# Introduction

This document is a short summary of all the hard work of the Book Contract Committee. It will elaborate on the three main suppliers that were researched by the committee: WO4You, StudyStore and Smartbooks. They will be evaluated on several aspects including commission, contact, availability, interface etc.. We hope to inform you and your fellow board members sufficiently, as to make a sensible decision on the GMA of 26th of January.

# WO4You

This is a relatively new supplier. Associations from Eindhoven, Delft, Groningen, Nijmegen, Utrecht, Amsterdam and Tilburg have a contract here (Eindhoven and Delft for two years already). The feedback from these associations is positive.

## **Commission**

There is a total commission of 20%, which every association can divide for themselves. That means that a part can go to the student, a part to the association and possibly a part to OS (e.g. 17% as a discount to the student, 2% commission to the association and 1% to OS). It is advised to keep the division at the same level for associations so that there are no big differences in prices for the same books (e.g. one association has a 15% discount on calculus while the other has 19%, which is a big difference). This division can be changed every year.

## **Contact for students and associations**

Associations have their own contact person to call. For students, there is a helpdesk. The helpdesk and contact persons are in close contact, so response time is very short.

## **Availability of books**

If a book has an ISBN, they can most likely deliver it. So also the UT-specific calculus book for example. If a professor makes his/her own book and sells that to students, WO4You can also collect these books and sell them for us. Besides, when the delivery time of a book is more than two weeks, they will send an email to the student. When this is the case for a large group of students, they will also send an email to the association with an explanation.

## **Interface backend**

The association gets an excel template where they need to fill in the name of their association and the names of the books they want with the corresponding subject, ISBN and an estimation of how many will be sold. Once WO4You receives this, they will check it. All possible problems will be discussed with the associations. For example, whenever books have a new edition, they will ask which version should be delivered.

## **Languages**

The website is in Dutch, English, French and German.

## **Contract**

Associations are allowed to resell second-hand books, on, for example, a book market. However, then it should be kept in mind for the expected number of books sold. It is not allowed to show the list of books on another website (e.g. also have a contract with Studystore).

## **Delivery**

WO4you is able to ship to other countries. Besides, if an association wants books sent to their association instead of individual students that is also possible when discussed with the contact person.

### **Prices**

Usually, the prices of books are lower than Studystore. They cannot guarantee that they are lower than for example bol.com, because they cannot give discounts on specific books which bol.com can do.

# StudyStore

StudyStore is a part of the CentraalBoekbeheer. They have been a partner of UT associations for quite some time now and are thus familiar with our wishes. They also have contacts in other major universities but have seen a decline in their customers after their sudden moving of warehouse. This resulted in many complications in book deliveries and a never seen before height in contact hours and complaints. Moreover, they are completely revising their contract, so some variables are still unknown.

## **Commission**

Previously they provided the general 20% discount on books, which could be shifted as a commission for the associations. This meant that all associations received a 19% discount and the 1% went to OS, which was approximately 5000 euros. Associations then still had the freedom to do with the 19% discount as they pleased. It seems like this will stay the same for the new contract.

## **Helpdesk**

This year, the usually reliable helpdesk of StudyStore got overwhelmed by the sheer amount of complaints and questions from SAs and students alike. They do advise SAs to send all students with complaints to the helpdesk of StudyStore when this is necessary because there, people with expertise can help them further, also shifting the blame or problem more towards StudyStore, not making the SAs feel so responsible. This did not work as intended this year, because StudyStore had to hire external helpdesk personnel to counter the high demand. These were obviously less knowledgeable.

## **Availability of books**

Just like each year, StudyStore is sure they will be able to provide all the books on the book lists and in time.

## **Interface backend**

This will be the same as you are used to, with one minor change: the White Label Shops will get removed from the backend. The LML-system will continue to exist with the booklists in them. The LML-list will be added to the Studystore backend with an (optional) association logo.

## **Languages**

The website is available in Dutch and English. However, some parts of the website are not fully functional in English, which they were not aware of and promise to look into as soon as possible. The helpdesk should also be fully internationally friendly. However, due to the external personnel, the quality of the service got worse.

## **Contract**

The contract will be changed and checked by a legal team from StudyStore. They will look at the liability statements. In the last weeks of January, they expect to be able to give more clarity, for now, the contract is still under construction.

### **Delivery**

They can provide delivery to houses in the Netherlands. They also provide delivery to one central point, which some associations make use of. They are looking into delivery options to foreign countries, mainly Germany, but are limited by their shipping company.

### **Prices**

As discussed above, the prices will be comparable to other suppliers. The exact discounts are not yet disclosed, but will also be comparable to other suppliers, around 19-20%.

# Smartbooks

Smartbooks is the online version of the books supplier of the VU. Outside the VU they also deliver books to study associations of the UvA, Utrecht and Leiden. The organization describes itself as 'not too big, not too small' meaning that they are big enough to be able to deliver all books, but not too big as to lose overview between all orders and universities.

## **Commission**

Smartbooks works with different systems for pricing and commissions. For the pricing, they have a 15% discount on books in order to achieve their aim of always being cheaper than Bol.com and Amazon. The students will get this discount regardless. Next to that is the commission, which will be 3% and will go to OS. OS will have the complete freedom to divide the commission between even cheaper books for students, its own financial balance, or the study associations.

## **Helpdesk**

For students, there is an excellent helpdesk that, according to themselves, managed to only have a response delay time of three days on the busiest days of the academic year. The service desk has clear communication about delays in deliveries and offers the possibility of a refund if the book takes way too long.

## **Availability of books**

Smartbooks is able to deliver every book. The organization will be involved together with the teachers and study associations in drawing up the books list and will deliver regardless of how small the amount of books bought is. Smartbooks even offers the possibility of selling an earlier edition of a book if they are told in time, this could be useful when a teacher has built their teaching program around this older version and doesn't want to adapt that to a newer one.

## **Interface backend**

As said earlier, Smartbooks will be actively involved in setting up the books list together with the study association and teaching staff. Associations will get their own webpage that they can design themselves. Students have to make an account with Smartbooks, this can be done without being a member of a study association, and thus they can buy books without being a member. To compensate for this setup, it is possible to let people become a member of a study association via the Smartbooks webpage of the association.

## **Languages**

The website is in Dutch and English.

## **Contract**

Smartbooks allows for reselling of second-hand books, they will also facilitate this reselling by accepting second-hand books that students want to resell and selling them for the student. The student can then earn around 60% of the original price. Large physical sales are also possible,

the books will then be 'borrowed' from Smartbooks until resold, and the ones that aren't resold will be taken back by Smartbooks.

**Delivery**

Smartbooks ships to almost all counties in the world for the Post NL rate.

**Prices**

Smartbooks can't be extremely specific on the prices of the books as it fluctuates a lot these days. They do however aim to be cheaper than Bol.com and Amazon.