



Open Educational Resources Policy

Purpose of Policy

This policy outlines the University's position on Open Educational Resources (OERs) and provides guidelines for practice in learning and teaching.

The University encourages staff and students to use, create, and publish OERs to enhance the quality of the student experience, increase the provision of learning opportunities for all, and improve teaching practices. It also recognises that the use and creation of OERs is consistent with the University's vision and values; to discover knowledge and make the world a better place, and to ensure our teaching and research is relevant to society, diverse, inclusive, and accessible to all.

Overview

This document provides background, University position and guidance for the use of OERs in learning and teaching at the University of Edinburgh.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy applies to all students and staff in the University.

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Document control

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Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Learning, Teaching and Web Services				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy , IP Commercialisation Policies , Lecture Recording Policy , Virtual Classroom Policy , Research Data Management Policy , Research Publications & Copyright Policy				
UK Quality Code	Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching				
Policies superseded by this policy	2016 Open Educational Resources Policy				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490.				
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Background

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are “learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others.”¹

At the University of Edinburgh we believe that OERs are strongly in keeping with our institutional vision and values; to discover knowledge and make the world a better place, and to ensure our teaching and research is relevant to society, diverse, inclusive, and accessible to all. We sustain a deep allegiance and commitment to the interests of the city and region in which we are based, alongside our national and international efforts, ensuring relevance to all. In line with the UNESCO OER Recommendation, we believe that OERs and open knowledge can contribute to achieving the aims of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which the University is committed to through the SDG Accord.

Our staff and students use, create and publish a wide range of teaching and learning materials to support exceptional learning experiences, including course notes, hand-outs, course work assignments, audio, video, images, animations, multimedia materials, ebooks, open textbooks and others. Staff may provide students with access to open resources to support learning from the University library, museums and collections or from beyond the University.

Staff and students at the University of Edinburgh are strongly encouraged to use OERs to enhance learning and teaching whilst contributing to “a vast pool of educational resources on the Internet, open and free for all to use ... creating a world where each and every person on earth can access and contribute to the sum of all human knowledge”².

University position

1. The use, creation and publication of OERs is consistent with the University’s vision and values; to discover knowledge and make the world a better place, and to ensure our teaching and research is relevant to society, diverse, inclusive, and accessible to all.
2. The University encourages staff and students to create and publish OERs to enhance the quality of the student experience, increase the provision of learning opportunities for all, and contribute to the global pool of open knowledge.
3. The University also encourages staff and students to reuse and repurpose existing OERs and open licensed resources, created within and beyond the University,

¹ UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (2019).

² Cape Town Declaration. (2007). *Cape Town Open Education Declaration: Unlocking the Promise of Open Educational Resources*. Retrieved from: www.capetowndeclaration.org/read-the-declaration



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provided they are relevant, fit-for-purpose and used in accordance with the terms of the licence. This will help to expand the pool of resources available for teaching and learning, reduce duplication of effort, and increase return on investment.

4. It is expected that staff and students will use, create and publish OERs in a wide range of formats, including but not limited to, course materials and handbooks, images, video, multimedia resources, podcasts, assessment items, ebooks, open textbooks and course work assignments.
5. Whether or not OERs are used or published in a School, Department or Service is ultimately a decision for the Head of School, Head of Department or Head of Service as appropriate. Unless stated to the contrary, it is assumed that use, creation and publication of single units or small collections will be allowed. Where use, creation and publication are to be restricted, Schools, Departments and Services are encouraged to identify and communicate a rationale for restriction. It is expected that justifications for restriction will normally be based on protection of commercial interests.
6. University policies on intellectual property rights (IPR) must be adhered to.³ When using OERs, students and staff must comply with the terms of the licence of use.
7. University policies and guidance on data protection must be adhered to.
8. All OERs used and created must be as accessible as reasonably possible for all users and must comply with the University policy on Accessible and Inclusive Learning:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf
9. The University reserves the right to restrict access to, remove or edit any resources it hosts that do not comply with its policies, and to request removal of resources from external repositories or sites.

Guidance

1. It is the responsibility of staff and students to ensure that they have the necessary rights to publish an OER and that all resources published comply with all relevant legislation, policy and guidance (e.g. copyright, IPR, data protection, accessibility).
2. Staff and students are advised to publish OERs using a Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC BY). Other Creative Commons licences may be used if colleagues feel this is necessary or appropriate for their particular resource, or to

³ Examples of relevant policies here may include the [Lecture Recording Policy](#); [Virtual Classroom Policy](#); and [University policies on IP commercialisation](#)



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comply with the licence of any third-party content used in the resource.

3. When creating and publishing OERs, the copyright owner(s), author(s), date and Creative Commons licence must be visibly attributed. The copyright owner will normally be the University of Edinburgh for OERs created at the University. Author(s) and performer(s) should also be properly acknowledged, giving recognition for work undertaken, along with date and Creative Commons licence applied so that others can clearly understand what permissions for reuse are being granted. An example of good attribution would be:

© [Author Name], The University of Edinburgh, CC BY, 2021

4. Staff and students creating OERs must ensure any personally identifiable information (PII) within their resource is processed on an appropriate lawful basis, in accordance with data protection law and University policy. Creators should be aware that resources containing PII processed on the lawful basis of “consent” are at risk of that consent being withdrawn at any time, and that a person’s name, username, image, voice and personal opinions are all considered as PII.
5. The University recommends that open educational resources should be published in an appropriate repository or public-access website in order to maximise their discovery and use by others. Where OERs have been created as part of an externally funded activity, any licensing regulations and repository locations mandated as a condition of the funding should be adhered to.
6. The University recommends that audio and audio-visual OERs should be published in the University’s multimedia repository, Media Hopper Create.
7. Where students are creating OERs as part of their programme of study or within a staff-directed project, these guidelines should be followed and OERs should be checked by a member of staff before publication.
8. The University actively encourages staff and students to reuse and repurpose existing OERs created by colleagues within the University, and by other institutions and organisations. Examples might include MOOC videos, open textbooks, open data sets, simulations, 3D models, cultural heritage resources. The OER Service provides advice and guidance on finding, reusing and repurposing all kinds of open licensed content.

This document is an update of an earlier 2016 policy, itself adapted from University of Leeds OERs (2012, no longer available; [current 2017 version](#)), incorporating additions from the [GCU Interim OER Policy](#) and the University of Greenwich Position in relation to Open Educational Practices 2015-2017 (no longer available on [blogs.gre.ac.uk](#)).



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