

# NMIT STAFF GUIDE TO OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

## What Are Open Educational Resources?

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which has supported the development of a world-wide Open Educational Resources (OER) movement, provides the following definition of OER:

*“OER are teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property licence that permits their free use or re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials or techniques used to support access to knowledge”.*

### Ten key points:

1. OER are free to use and publicly available.
2. OER can be used in teaching and learning (usually with attribution to the original creator).
3. The majority of OER can be altered and adapted ('repurposed').
4. Using OER is not cheating; in fact it can improve the quality of learning experiences by building on other people's work.
5. OER development is a global movement – don't be afraid to search global OER repositories.
6. OER materials are not necessarily just teaching materials; there are a number of student support materials available as OER.
7. OER are not just for teachers to use or repurpose; students can be encouraged to use OER to support their own learning.
8. Work is underway to incorporate OER into NMIT's Library Learning Centre.
9. NMIT is a 'Founding Anchor Member' of the OER university - a virtual collaboration of like-minded institutions committed to creating flexible pathways for OER learners to gain formal academic credit.
10. Don't knock it until you have tried it.

**Go on, search for an OER today!**

## How Can OER Benefit Academic Staff?

Too often staff are creating learning materials for modules and courses that have already been developed elsewhere to an excellent standard. By utilising a number of OER repositories we hope to enable staff to spend more time designing the learning experience and search OER repositories to source quality learning materials which they can adapt if necessary for use within their learning design.

Personal benefits are that the materials that members of staff offer for the OER repository will include metadata that identifies them as the original author (attribution). By sharing content in and beyond NMIT, staff can be given recognition for their work by other practitioners and institutions. This could lead to opportunities for developing conference papers and workshops. If everyone makes their material available within NMIT then students can see what your course offers, aiding integration in learning design and curriculum development.

We hope that you would find satisfaction in sharing resources in a way that builds a community of sharing. The stronger we can build the OER system, the more materials will be made available for colleagues to use in return.

### Ten key points:

1. Spend more time designing learning rather than creating content. (You really don't have to recreate the wheel.)
2. Get recognition for your own materials by sharing them as OER.
3. Engage in a global community of sharing and using educational resources.
4. Collaborate with colleagues to release OER materials.
5. Set yourself an OER development target and implement it as a Knowledge Exchange objective.
6. Spend more time working to your strengths and search for free materials where your own content may be weaker.
7. Encourage your students to search for OER materials to support their own learning. (You never know, they might find something you can use next year!)
8. Embed the use of OER as part of your module/course review process.
9. Avoid legal problems associated with using copyright material.
10. Get recognition for your work by being attributed by others through OER release.

# Guidance On Using OER Material

Open educational resources are developed with a sense of sharing and, as such, build communities of like-minded people. The communities help to encourage users to create OER material as well as use it.

First you will need to search within an OER repository (there are a number listed at the end of this guide). Often you will find ones relating to specific subject areas or it may be a larger repository that has a range of materials. You will eventually find ones that you value and trust.

Use OER as part of your wider learning design. Sometimes that design may be born from the inspiration of an OER.

## Ten key points:

1. Although OER are free, be mindful of the licence under which they have been released. Most importantly, be sure to attribute the original authors.
2. Some OER allow for modification and repurposing. If so, consider releasing that material as a new OER even if that isn't a licence requirement.
3. It can sometimes take a while to find suitable materials, but experience has shown that the time spent finding a resource is usually less than it would take to develop it.
4. Bookmark your favourite repositories: you will begin to build up a useful list of where you can get relevant OER. Be sure to share that with colleagues.
5. Do contact authors of materials if their contact details are available – it's nice to know others have found value in your work.
6. Don't use materials outside the scope of their licences.
7. Spread the word – if you find a good resource let others know.
8. Consider setting a goal of using a certain percentage of OER material in your course delivery.
9. Respond to people who contact you about your OER. It may lead to new collaborations.
10. Use your students to help evaluate OER you use or to help you develop further improvements.

# OER Repositories and Resources

**Creative Commons**

<http://creativecommons.org>

**Connexions (Rice University)**

<http://cnx.org>

**Flat World Knowledge**

<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com>

**Khan Academy**

<http://www.khanacademy.org>

**Flexbooks**

<http://www.ck12.org/flexbook/>

**Saylor**

<http://www.saylor.org>

**OER university**

[http://wikieducator.org/OER\\_university](http://wikieducator.org/OER_university)

**MIT Open Courseware**

<http://ocw.mit.edu>

**College Open Textbooks**

<http://collegeopentextbooks.org>

**TED-Ed**

<http://ed.ted.com>

**OER Commons**

<http://www.oercommons.org>

**Open Courseware Consortium**

<http://www.ocwconsortium.org>

**Open University**

<http://openlearn.open.ac.uk>

**Open Culture**

<http://www.openculture.com>

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