University of Essex

Code of practice when sharing Open Educational Resources

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1. Purpose of the code of practice

1.1 The mission of the University is one of excellence in education and research, for the benefit of individuals and communities, in line with the Charitable Objects outlined in our Charter.[1] We are committed to research-led teaching that focuses on enhancing our students' ability to articulate and apply their creative and analytical research mindset to the benefit of their studies, their future lives, and communities.

1.2 The University is committed to supporting our students to achieve their potential. We will support our students to build the necessary skills and experience to progress successfully into the next stage of their lives and careers, including further study, social action, and the world of work.

1.3 This code of practice summarises our commitment and approach to Open Educational Resources (OER). We explain what OER are, and why they are important. Our code of practice is underpinned by more detailed University documentation, including the Education Strategy (2019-2028), the University Intellectual Property (IP) Policy (.pdf), Open Research Position Statement, and the Library Supporting Strategy.

1.4 There is no obligation for any educational resources developed at the University of Essex to be made openly available. However, the University supports and encourages individuals who wish to do so to create and share their own OER, as well as to re-use, repurpose, and adapt existing OER to support teaching and learning. Some educational resources cannot be made openly available due to ethical, legal, or commercial restrictions. Further details on where educational resources may not be suitable for open sharing are available in section 4.

2. What are Open Educational Resources?

2.1 Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium where copyright subsisting in them has been released under an open licence,

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[1] "The objects of the University shall be to advance education, scholarship, knowledge and understanding by teaching and research, for the benefit of individuals and society at large", University of Essex Charter, 2022, p.5.

including a CC0 public domain licence. OER permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation, and redistribution by others.[2]

2.2   Educational resources are broad in scope, and can include, but are not limited to: course notes, hand-outs, lecture slides, audio content, videos, images, animations, multimedia materials, artworks, ebooks, and textbooks.

2.3   OER are relevant to all educators, although the applications will vary according to discipline and educational and research context. As OER can be considered research outputs in and of themselves, they fall in scope of the institutional commitment to be "as open as possible, as closed as necessary", as set out in the Open Research Position Statement (.pdf).

3. Benefits of Open Educational Resources

3.1   OER enable an environment where we can meet a core ambition to draw on a wide range of stakeholder expertise, including our own research strengths, to shape our education practice to meet the needs of our growing and diverse student community in an ever-changing external environment.

3.2   Sharing and using OER:

- helps to facilitate a high quality, inclusive, diverse, and sustainable educational experience

- helps to expand the pool of resources available for teaching and learning, reduces duplication of effort, and increases the potential for increased educational impact

- widens access to education and educational resources, including within our local communities

- enhances and promotes the institution's reputation through producing and sharing quality teaching materials, inspiring educators and students to join our ambitious community by promoting the excellence of an Essex education nationally and internationally

- contributes toward the delivery of a transformational education by encouraging impactful and innovative approaches, using learning from research and national and international experiences, facilitating the meaningful dissemination and adoption of good and best practice

4. Expectations and guidance

4.1   As outlined in the University IP Policy (.pdf), the University owns the intellectual property rights (IPR) in work produced by University employees in delivering their role. This includes material

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[2] UNESCO Recommendation on OER, 2019.

produced for the purposes of the design, content and delivery of a University course, whether used at the University's premises or used in relation to a distance learning and/or eLearning project. As such, **employees are required to notify the Director of Research and Enterprise Office (REO) or their nominee, as well as the Deputy University Secretary or their nominee,** *before* **making any educational resources openly available**. The commercial potential of these resources will be considered before a decision is made on the potential for creating an OER. Any OER created before the adoption of this statement do not require retrospective notification.

4.2   All OER created must clearly state the copyright owner(s), author(s), date, and the CC licence that has been applied. Copyright in materials created through fulfilling duties of employment at the University is owned by the University of Essex. Where preferred, authors/creators may add their own name for attribution to the copyright statement. An example statement would be:

© The University of Essex, licensed under CC BY, 2024. Attribution to include [Author/Creator name], who authored/created the work.

4.3   The University recommends that OER should be shared using a Creative Commons Attribution Licence (CC BY) to comply with the UN definition of OER. Other CC licences may be applied to meet the licensing requirements of any third-party content used in the resource, or where CC BY is otherwise deemed inappropriate.

4.4   The University recommends that OER should be shared in an appropriate repository or public access website to maximise visibility, discovery, and re-use by others. Examples are The National Teaching Repository, OER Commons, and MERLOT.

4.5   OER recommended to students must be as accessible as reasonably possible for all users, and those created within the University must follow University guidance on web accessibility to ensure compliance with the government standard for Web Content Accessibility.

4.6   Educators must ensure any personally identifiable information (PII) within their OER is processed on an appropriate lawful basis, in accordance with data protection law and University policy. Creators of OER 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. PII includes, but is not limited to, a person's name, username, image, voice, and personal opinions.

4.7   OER created at the University must adhere to University policies and guidance on data protection.

4.8   The University encourages educators to reuse and repurpose existing OER created by colleagues within the University, and by other institutions and organisations. Examples might include MOOC videos, open textbooks, simulations, 3D models, and cultural heritage resources.

4.9   Educators must comply with licence terms and conditions when using or adapting existing OER in their teaching and learning, and ensure appropriate attribution.

5. Support for Open Educational Resources

5.1   Support is provided by Library and Cultural Services and the Research and Enterprise Office. This support includes an online guide on open educational resources.

5.2   The Author Rights Retention Policy empowers authors to control the dissemination of their research outputs and simplifies both funder and REF compliance. The Policy provides a key mechanism for Essex research to be as open as possible, and as closed as necessary.

5.3   Library and Cultural Services are committed to enabling an open research environment at the University of Essex. This includes providing technologies, expertise, and platforms for open publications, promoting a research culture focused on open and inclusive research practices, and working across the sector to ensure Essex is a connected, collaborative part of the open research environment.

5.4   Please contact Dr Rob Singh (rjsingh@essex.ac.uk and Lucy Johnson (lucyj@essex.ac.uk to request permission to create an OER. For further guidance on the IP Policy, please contact ipadmin@essex.ac.uk For further information on OER, please contact ressup@essex.ac.uk.

6. Acknowledgements

6.1   University of Edinburgh Open Educational Resources Policy (.pdf); University of the Highlands and Islands Open Educational Resources Policy (.pdf); University of Sheffield Open Educational Resources guidance; University of Leeds Open Educational Resources guidance.

Document Control Panel

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