

Open Educational Resources - Frequently Asked Questions (Extended Version)

This document is intended to introduce Open Educational Resources (OER) to interested faculty and administrators. Below are some frequently asked questions addressing OER benefits, curricular considerations and implementation specific to SAC's mission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OER Basics

- [What is OER?](#)
- [How widely used is OER?](#)
- [Why might OER be important to students and faculty?](#)
- [How does the quality of OER compare to commercially published material?](#)
- [How can I get help with OER?](#)
- [Do we have to use OER?](#)
- [Does OER infringe on my academic freedom?](#)
- [Who keeps up \(maintains\) OER?](#)

Curricular Issues

- [Can I list an OER textbook on my Course Outline of Record \(COR\)?](#)
- [What are the curriculum requirements for using OER for one section \(where not all sections are using it and it's not on the COR\)?](#)
- [How should we list an open resource on a Course Outline \(COR\)?](#)
- [Is it okay to list the textbook on the COR simply as "OER" or as a collection of links to lecture notes or other web pages?](#)
- [How do we get an ISBN for an open resource?](#)
- [How recent should a textbook listed on a COR be?](#)
- [Is 5 years from the date of the Course Outline of Record approval or date of the section?](#)
- [Can I use an old electronic textbook as OER?](#)
- [I found this great OER material, but it has been published over 5 years ago. I can't find any comparable material \(OER or not\) published more recently. What do I do?](#)
- [How does OER affect transferability?](#)
- [What if certain universities require a particular textbook for a course?](#)

Getting Started - OER Implementation

- [How do I begin establishing an OER course?](#)
- [How do I find OER for my course?](#)
- [How do I know if the OER materials I find are within copyright compliance for use on a mass scale \(e.g., several sections of a course\)?](#)
- [What does CC mean?](#)
- [What if my students want to print the OER/open course text?](#)
- [How do we get OER videos captioned?](#)
- [How long does it take to adopt an OER textbook?](#)
- [How long does it take to adapt or develop OER?](#)

- How can I ensure OER I may wish to use for my class is accessible to students with disabilities?

OER Basics

- **What is OER?**

It might be similar to what you are currently doing. OER stands for Open Educational Resources. "Open Educational Resources are teaching and learning materials that you may freely use and reuse, without charge. OER often have a Creative Commons or GNU license that state specifically how the material may be used, reused, adapted, and shared" (OER Commons¹). OER materials can include textbooks, test materials, instructional videos, and other learning materials and tools.

For more information about OER and instructional resources, visit the "About OER" section of Nealley Library's OER guide at <http://libguides.sac.edu/oer>.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How widely used is OER?**

OER is used worldwide by colleges, universities (including Cal State and UC campuses), and K-12 institutions.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **Why might OER be important to students and faculty?**

OER materials are available to students on day 1 of class, avoiding delays due to financial difficulties, and enhancing student equity.

[Return to table of contents](#)

According to the Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources (CCCOER),

The Open Educational Resources (OER) movement encourages the creation and reuse of free, high-quality content and open source learning systems to replace expensive and proprietary systems. By promoting OER, community colleges can create sustainable academic resources for students and provide collaborative professional development opportunities for faculty. A wealth of openly licensed and public domain materials are currently available at open repositories on the web that faculty can repurpose in their classes to replace items formerly required for purchase by students.²

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How does the quality of OER compare to commercially published material?**

Textbook quality varies for both open and commercially published materials. Just as with selecting a commercially produced textbook, faculty must evaluate the quality of a

¹ <http://www.oercommons.org/about#about-open-educational-resources>

The Open Educational Resources (OER) Commons is supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, ISKME, the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education created OER Commons as part of the Foundation's worldwide OER initiative.

² <http://oerconsortium.org/about/> (from the "Goal" section)

Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources

particular OER text. Select OER providers employ a peer-review process similar to that used by some commercial publishers³.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How can I get help with OER?**

Contact the [Distance Education Office](#) at SAC. Assistance and resources are available to help SAC faculty coordinate OER for their courses. You can also contact OER Librarian Annie Knight (knight_annie@sac.edu) for assistance with finding available OER materials.

[Return to table of contents](#)

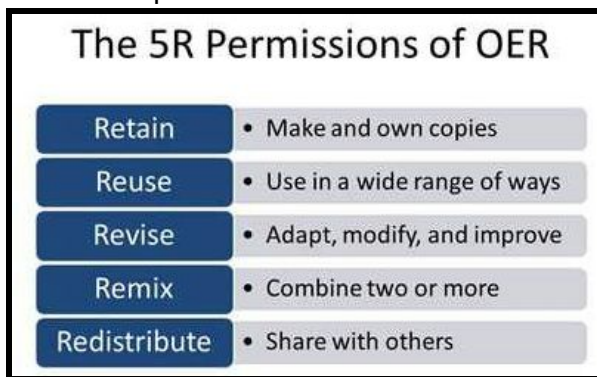
- **Do we have to use OER?**

Using OER is not a requirement for SAC faculty, but you are certainly encouraged to explore possibilities for open/free content that can provide a more cost-effective alternative to your students.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **Does OER infringe on my academic freedom?**

Faculty enjoy the freedom to choose their course materials. In addition, faculty who choose to use OER have the freedom to modify the material as they see fit, as illustrated in the OER permission framework below⁴.



[Return to table of contents](#)

- **Who keeps up (maintains) OER?**

The [Distance Education Office](#) at SAC. Organizations and companies such as Lumen Learning and OpenStax maintain the content of their professionally edited, peer-reviewed OER.

[Return to table of contents](#)

Curricular Issues

- **Can I list an OER textbook on my Course Outline of Record (COR)?**

Yes, it should be listed on the COR in a way that a reviewer could access the content

³ Peer review processes can vary, as with traditionally published textbooks and course materials. For an example of an OER peer review process, visit

http://info.merlot.org/merlothelp/merlot_peer_review_information.htm

⁴ <http://lumenlearning.com/announcement-5r-open-course-design-framework/>

Lumen Learning is an OER content creator and partner of Santa Ana College's OER initiatives.

(e.g., ISBN or URL).

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **What are the curriculum requirements for using OER for one section (where not all sections are using it and it's not on the COR)?**

According to the CSU and UC's *Guiding Notes for General Education Course Reviewers* (2013),

“It's understood that the instructor in a given section may choose a different text, but the proposed one is still given close attention...

Texts don't need to be published in hard copy. The UC and CSU welcome the use of online texts and other Open Educational Resources, so long as the resource is a stable, bona fide textbook, and not just a collection of links to lecture notes or other web pages.” (p. 8)⁵

These guidelines were also recommended by Santa Ana College's Articulation Officer.⁶

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How should we list an open resource on a Course Outline (COR)?**

The same as you would a commercial textbook. Using an ISBN is recommended. Include a URL where a reviewer could see the content, especially if the OER text is the only textbook listed on the COR.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **Is it okay to list the textbook on the COR simply as “OER” or as a collection of links to lecture notes or other web pages?**

No. A textbook must be listed on the COR. See also question 9 regarding individual sections of a course.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How do we get an ISBN for an open resource?**

Some open resources have ISBNs assigned to them; however, ISBNs are not required for use of open resources. An OER textbook can be made available in printed form and an ISBN issued by request through Montezuma (orders@montezumapublishing.com / 619-594-2900. You can also contact Christopher Wild of the Don Bookstore for assistance (Wild_Christopher@rscsd.edu / (714) 564-6889).

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How recent should a textbook listed on a COR be?**

CSU and UC's *Guiding Notes for General Education Course Reviewers* (2013) advise the following: “Normally at least one text (and for some disciplines, all the texts) should have been published within seven years of the submission date (e.g., published in 2004 for course outlines submitted fall, 2011)” (p. 8).

Other comments in this document suggest that textbook should be more recent than 5 years old (p. 9).

⁵ <http://www.calstate.edu/app/documents/2013-January-GE-Reviewers-Guiding-Notes.pdf>

The California State University, & University of California (2013, January). *Guiding notes for general education course reviewers*. Retrieved from

⁶ Personal communication, February 23, 2015

If an OER text is approaching 5 years old, the content should be updated similar to how a commercial text edition would be updated. Usually this would be done by the organization, company or author who released the OER content.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **Is 5 years from the date of the Course Outline of Record approval or date of the section?**

At the time of the revision, the publication date of the textbook cannot be more 5 years old.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **Can I use an old electronic textbook as OER?**

Course textbooks or OER should be published within the last five years if it's listed on the COR. In cases where an individual section is using OER but it's not listed on the COR, it's still recommended to update it in a manner similar to how a publisher would release an updated edition.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **I found this great OER material, but it has been published over 5 years ago. I can't find any comparable material (OER or not) published more recently. What do I do?**

Contact the [Distance Education Office](#) at SAC to inquire about possible options.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How does OER affect transferability?**

It does not affect transferability, unless a specific textbook is required by a particular university. Inquire with your department chair if you have questions.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **What if certain Universities require a particular textbook for a course?**

You must use the textbook required by that university.

[Return to table of contents](#)

Getting Started with Implementing OER

- **How do I begin establishing an OER course?**

Contact [Cherylee Kushida](#), Director of [Distance Education Office](#) at SAC.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How do I find OER for my course?**

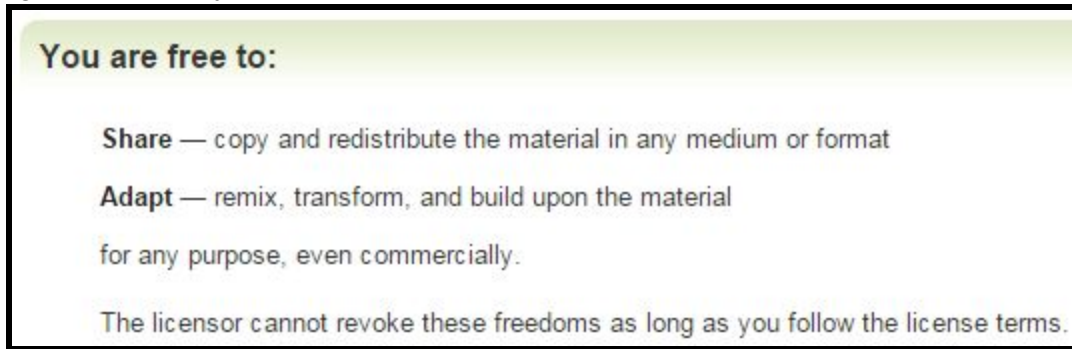
Several online sites and repositories exist that contain OER supporting a variety of disciplines and subject areas. You can find a list of such resources on the SAC OER Libguide at http://libguides.sac.edu/oer_resources

You are also welcome to contact librarian Annie Knight (OER liaison) for research assistance: knight_annie@sac.edu

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How do I know if the OER materials I find are within copyright compliance for use on a mass scale (e.g., several sections of a course)?**

Review the usage rights statement for the specific open resource. For example, many open texts are licensed under a Creative Commons license that details exactly how the resource may be used, shared, and possibly modified. Below is an example of the usage rights afforded by a resource published with a [Creative Commons CC-BY-3.0 license](#):



For further confirmation, it is recommended that you contact the creator of the content to ensure the usage rights meet your particular needs. Obtaining a record (via email, for example) of permission is also advised.

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **What does CC mean?**

OER content often carries a Creative Commons (CC) license. Creative Commons licenses provide “a standardized way to give the public permission to share and use a creative work — on conditions set by the author/creator⁷. For more information on Creative Commons, visit [CreativeCommons.org](#). For information about different CC licensing options, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **What if my students want to print the OER/open course text?**

As long as the open resource allows for reproductions as specified in its usage rights statement, the material can be made available a number of ways:

- a. Faculty can make a print copy available in the bookstore. Contact Christopher Wild of the Don Bookstore for assistance (Wild_Christopher@rscdd.edu / (714) 564-6889). The Don Bookstore is very supportive of OER textbook initiatives.
- b. Faculty can make it available through print-on-demand services, such as [Lulu.com](#) or [amazon.com](#)
- c. Faculty can create and upload .pdf versions of the OER for students to print as needed

[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How do we get OER videos captioned?**

- a. Verify that the licensing allows for modifications of the video (e.g., captioning)
- b. Contact [Distance Education Office](#) for assistance

[Return to table of contents](#)

⁷ “What is Creative Commons?” from [CreativeCommons.org](#)

- **How long does it take to adopt an OER textbook?**
Adopting an existing OER textbook without modification takes the same amount of time as adopting a traditional text.
[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How long does it take to adapt or develop OER?**
The amount of time required to adapt materials can vary depending on several factors, including existing OER materials or previous adoptions at SAC of OER materials for your course. If development of original content is necessary, you are encouraged to contact the [Distance Education Office](#) for more information.
[Return to table of contents](#)

- **How can I ensure OER I may wish to use for my class is accessible to students with disabilities?**
As with any other type of course material, it's best practice to consult with DSPP.
[Return to table of contents](#)