Policy on the use and creation of Open Educational Resources

(approved by the Senate in December 2022)

Open Educational Resources (OER) 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 licence, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others. (UNESCO Recommendation on OER, 2019)

This policy outlines the University position on OER, and provides guidance for staff and students who wish to use or create them.

The University supports and encourages the re-use, re-purposing and adaptation of existing OER to support teaching and learning, and also supports and encourages those who wish to create and share their own OER. This aligns with the ACP for Senior University Teachers, Senior Lecturers and Professors.

OER are consistent with the University Vision for Education, in that they can contribute to an inclusive digital learning environment that enables all students to engage effectively in their learning. They may also support future employability and lifelong learning after graduation.

The use of OER aligns the University with the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Guidance

OER may be used alongside other materials to facilitate a high quality, inclusive, diverse and sustainable educational experience.

Members of the University must comply with licence terms and conditions when using or adapting existing OER in their teaching and learning, and ensure appropriate attribution.

OER may be created in a wide range of formats including, but not limited to, textbooks, videos, podcasts and multimedia resources.

OER recommended to students or created within the University must be as accessible as reasonably possible for all users, bearing in mind University guidance on digital accessibility.

The University IP Policy (approved by the Senate in December 2022) acknowledges that OER materials created by staff are increasingly a part of the Higher Education landscape in the UK, and states that material created must have an appropriate licence, such as 'Creative Commons,' in place to ensure appropriate attribution to the University.

University staff who do not want their teaching materials to be shared outside of the institution should include a statement indicating that the material is © University of Sheffield and must not be shared.

The University recommends that OER should be shared using a Creative Commons Attribution Licence (CC BY) to fully 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.

All OER created must clearly state the copyright owner(s), author(s) / creator(s), date and the CC licence that has been applied. Copyright in materials created in the course of employment at the University rests with the University of Sheffield. An example statement would be: © [Creator name], The University of Sheffield, licensed under CC BY, 2022.

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 Sheffield Pressbooks Network, OER Commons,and MERLOT.

The University Library is developing services to support the use, adaptation and creation of OER. Guidance on OER is also available in the White Rose Libraries OER Toolkit.