Institutional OER Policy

Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata

NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to promote the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

Open Educational Resources (OER) Policy
[Adopted by the School of Education, School of Professional Studies and School of Vocational Studies]

NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA, INDIA

The policy is developed with the guidance of Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)

Preamble

The Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) established under the Act of West Bengal State Legislative Assembly in 1997 is dedicated to increasing access to quality higher education through appropriate use of open and distance learning methods through provisions of open distance and lifelong learning opportunities. Provision of quality learning materials forms an important strategy in providing access to quality education, and the affordances of information and communication technologies including the Internet and World Wide Web has enabled anytime, anywhere access to educational resources online. Number of platforms and resources are now available online for the learners, and due to the read-write abilities of the Web 2.0, teachers are sharing their works online more often than before. While educational materials are being shared online for personal use of the online users, most of the learning resources are available under default copyright requiring permission from the authors/creators to re-use, revise, re-mix, and re-distribute. To facilitate adoption and adaptation of existing learning resources, they must be available under open licenses, which is a legitimate provision under copyright law. Considering importance of the sharing of educational materials in the developing countries, the 2002 UNESCO Forum on the Impact of Open Course Ware for Higher Education in developing countries coined the term Open Educational Resources (OER) and expected to create a network of resources available freely for the use of the humanity as knowledge commons. While the movement of OER has grown over the years with several platforms and projects, UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in 2012 organized the World OER Congress that urged governments and educational institutions to adopt OER policies to promote the use of OER. Adoption of OER policy in NSOU will create the enabling environment for all the stakeholders of the university to create and use OER in production of educational resources and enable them to share these under appropriate open licenses.

Definitions

- *Open Educational Resources* are defined as teaching, learning and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.
  In simple terms, OER is a small self-contained unit of self-assessable teaching with a measurable learning objective, having an open licence attached, often in digital electronic format and generally free to use.

- *Content Developers:* Any person engaged in the development of teaching and learning materials used by the *University*.

- *Copyrights:* Copyrights refer to laws that regulate the use of the work of a creator, such as an artist or author. This includes copying, distributing, altering and displaying creative, literary and other types of work. Generally, the copyrights are retained by the University in respect of all resources developed by it.

- *Open License:* A license that specifies what can and cannot be done with a work (whether sound, text, image or multimedia). It grants permissions and states restrictions. Broadly speaking, an open license is one which grants permission to access, re-use and redistribute a work with few or no restrictions.

Purpose of the Policy
The purpose of the OER Policy of the University is to:
- Make materials available under Creative Commons licenses
- Support voluntary participation of Faculty and others in developing OER content
- Clarify in publication rights and licensing issues
- Provide guidance in development and review of OER materials prior to sharing them on a worldwide scale
- Define collaborations within and without the university with the intent to allow access to the open content.

Applicability
The OER policy is applicable to the following:
- In the first phase, course contents of the following schools may be released under the specific licensing policy mentioned in this document:
  - **a) School of Education**
  - **b) School of Professional Studies and**
  - **c) School of Vocational Studies**
- All content developers within the university and those engaged by the university for writing materials on short-term basis as subject matter experts for payment of certain fees or for free;
- All types of learning materials released in any physical or electronic format.
- In cases where the material is developed in collaboration/ partnership with other institutions, the guidelines governing that collaboration as indicated in the MOU will prevail. However, any such agreement should duly consider the OER Policy before any deviation is agreed upon with justification approved by the competent authority of the University.

Types of Licences
While the University supports free and open access to all educational resources and will make them freely available on OER Repository through Creative Commons Attribution all contents it owns would be CC-BY-NC.
CC-BY-NC: It only allows others to download the contents and share them with others as long as they credit NSOU, but they can't change them in any way or use them commercially.

However, the University may make exceptions to the sharing of intellectual property it owns on a case by case basis with detailed reasons for limiting the free access to material.

While sharing the materials of the University in appropriate licenses, it does not permit derivatives to use University logo for differentiation from the original.

Quality Assurance and Review System

- The *NSOU OER Repository* strives to provide resources of the highest quality. The reviewing process will be carried out at different levels.

- The curriculum based learning resources developed through peer reviewing and strict quality assurance mechanism inbuilt in the course development process will not require further reviewing for uploading on the repository. All other contributions will be peer reviewed within the department before uploading on the OER Repository.

- The OER Board will adopt a set of quality assurance guidelines and indicators to help teachers focus on quality of OER.

- At the university level, an OER Board will be created to review policy as well as the production, delivery and access processes of OER.

- Such OER Board will constitute the following members:
  Vice-chancellor, Chairperson of the Board
  Director/ Officer-in-Charge of the Schools of Studies
  Two OER experts nominated by the Vice-Chancellor

- The OER Board shall have a three years term, and will report annually to the Academic Council through the Vice Chancellor.

Liability

- All OER materials shared at the *NSOU OER Repository* to the world at large will carry a disclaimer indicating that the material is for educational purposes only and that the university absolves itself of any practical misuse of the OER materials or their content. OER materials authored and published by faculty and staff of the university and others does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the university.
- All learning materials published under CC license should include the following information in the credit page:
© Year, Name of the University. This learning resource is available under <u>CC-BY-NC</u>.

Role of the Faculty/Teachers/Content Developers

- The faculty member responsible for development of a course shall be the personal responsible for management and adoption of OER in the specific course. However, the discipline concerned shall take appropriate decision, on why a course will not be put on CC license, in a meeting and put the same on record. \\

- In general, the concerned faculty should search for appropriate OER to adopt/adapt in a course, thereby reducing the cost of the course production, as well as reduce the time to produce such material, and improve student learning.

If no OER is available in a topic, then that part of the content should be developed either by internal faculty or by engaging an appropriate expert from outside as per the normal procedure of

the University. When an external writer is engaged, the material should be reviewed, and appropriate copyright assigned to the University with indemnity to the University for plagiarism, if any, so that the material can be released by the University under CC licence.

Institutional Arrangements

- The teaching-learning materials produced by the university shall be shared in a suitable online platform.

- The central IT department shall be responsible for providing access to all the stakeholders, and maintenance of the platform.

- Faculty and staff members engaged in OER development shall be regularly provided with capacity building opportunity by the IT department to familiarize the stakeholders of the opportunities and technical feasible options of the platform.

- Regular update on Copyrights, OER and Open License shall be organized by the IT department to promote the use of OER.

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