MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

Library Policy on Open Educational Resources (OER)

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1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning resources with open licences which allow unlimited access, rights retention, reuse, revision and redistribution (UNESCO Recommendation on OER, 2019). OER can be created using a range of formats, for example open textbooks, lesson plans, videos, podcasts, quizzes, and other multimedia resources.

1.2 This policy outlines The University of Manchester Library's approach to the delivery and governance of the Library's OER Programme and applies to staff and students at The University of Manchester who adapt, adopt, or create OER for teaching and learning purposes by participating in the Library's OER Programme.

1.3 The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles, responsibilities, and processes that underpin the Library's OER Programme which aims to support the adoption, adaptation, creation, publication, and reuse of OER for teaching and learning, enabling staff and students to benefit from flexible, personalised and accessible learning resources.

Benefits for students:

- OER provide unrestricted access for students and are not constrained by traditional commercial publishing licensing models;
- Students can download OER for offline use across multiple devices;
- OER are accessible and can be used with assistive technologies;
- Open textbooks do not require students to login via their institution and can therefore be accessed by non-registered students completing life-long learning courses;
- Using OER can alleviate the financial cost of expensive books for students and the Library.

Benefits for staff:

- Teaching staff can create personalised learning resources through publishing OER which align content with module learning outcomes, without being restricted by commercial textbooks;
- Unlike commercial eTextbooks, OER can be quickly updated to include the latest research, ensuring teaching materials remain current;
- OER enable open pedagogy practices, such as co-creating content with students ensuring deeper learning and collaboration;
- Teaching staff can enhance professional visibility through publishing OER and contributing to the global academic community;
- OER are accessible and can help teaching staff to deliver equitable learning experiences for all students.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all staff and students at The University of Manchester who create, adapt, adopt, or share OER through participation in the Library's OER Programme and for use in teaching and learning.

2.2 This policy does not apply to research outputs, including journal articles, conference papers, monographs, book chapters and research datasets. Open Access requirements for publications are set out in the University's Publications Policy, while the management and sharing of research data are covered by the Research Data Management Policy. Research outputs may also be subject to funder, publisher and legal requirements. Staff and students seeking advice on Open Access publishing, including books and monographs, research data, or related funder requirements should contact the Office for Open Research.

3. Definitions

3.1 **OER**: Open Educational Resource(s). OER refers to teaching and learning resources in any format which reside in the public domain and have been released under an open licence which permits no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others (UNESCO, 2019). OER include a Creative Commons licence that explains how the resource may be used, adapted, and shared. OER can be differentiated from traditional educational resources in their licencing and can be defined as 'open' through the application of David Wiley's 5R framework:

- Retain: make, own, and control a copy of the resource
- Revise: edit, adapt, and modify your copy of the resource
- Remix: combine your original or revised copy of the resource with other existing material to create something new
- Reuse: use your original, revised, or remixed copy of the resource publicly
- Redistribute: share copies of your original, revised, or remixed copy of the resource with others (Wiley, 2023)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Library is responsible for the delivery and governance of the OER Programme which aims to support the adoption, adaptation, creation, publication, and dissemination of OER. The Library will:

- Provide guidance, training, and support to staff and students throughout the OER development process, including the adoption, adaptation, creation, and publication of OER;
- Maintain and support a publication platform to facilitate the creation, adaptation and dissemination of OER;
- Provide advice on copyright, licensing, and the appropriate use of Creative Commons licences, enabling creators to make informed decisions about how their work may be shared and reused;

- Support the discoverability and visibility of OER by creating and maintaining appropriate metadata and promoting published resources through relevant channels and communities of practice.

Where demand for OER creation and adaptation exceeds the capacity of the OER Programme, the Library will prioritise supporting OER which most closely align with the objectives of the programme. Priority will be given to OER that fulfil one or more of the following criteria:

- Support teaching and learning across the duration of a module or programme;
- Will be used to replace a title currently provided through the eTextbook Programme;
- Are intended for publication under licences that maximise opportunities for reuse, adaptation, and redistribution, such as CC BY;
- Demonstrate collaboration or co-creation opportunities with students or other partners;
- Maximise the dissemination of knowledge for the public good through the open sharing of educational resources.

4.2 It is the responsibility of teaching staff participating in the Library's OER Programme to:

- Create and update the original content of OER developed through the OER Programme;
- Where existing OER are being adapted or repurposed, teaching staff must ensure adaptations comply with the original licence of the work being adapted and provide relevant attributions to the original work;
- Where appropriate, teaching staff should identify peer review processes to support the academic quality and accuracy of OER;
- Ensure OER produced through the OER Programme are accessible, inclusive, and aligned with the principles set out in section 5 of this policy. Teaching staff should consider accessibility and inclusivity throughout the development process and take reasonable steps to ensure resources are usable by diverse learners;
- Ensure that third-party materials (including but not limited to images, diagrams, figures, datasets, audio and video) included within an OER comply with copyright law and licensing requirements. Any third-party content which is protected by copyright must be appropriately licenced, used under a recognised exception, or included with permission from the copyright holder. The Library's copyright service can provide further advice and guidance;
- Where applicable, provide attribution statements in works which have been adapted from existing OER. These should acknowledge the original creators of any reused content in accordance with the requirements of the original licence;
- Where Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have been used to generate, adapt, or enhance content, their use should be transparent and appropriately acknowledged. AI-generated content remains the responsibility of the author, who must ensure its accuracy, quality, legal compliance, and suitability for educational use. Authors should refer to the University's AI guidance before publishing AI-generated content.
- Where OER are co-created with students, teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that students are aware of and adhere to the principles and requirements set out in this policy.
- Where student-created content is included within an OER, teaching staff must ensure that students are aware of their intellectual property rights, understand how their work will be used and shared, and provide consent for publication under the selected Creative Commons licence.

5. General Principles

5.1 The Library recognises OER as a means of widening access to knowledge and enhancing educational opportunities both within and beyond The University of Manchester. Through the creation and sharing of openly licensed resources, staff can contribute to the University's social responsibility goals by making its teaching materials accessible to learners, educators and communities worldwide.

5.2 OER directly support the strategic ambitions of Manchester 2035, particularly the University's commitment to delivering flexible, personalised and digitally enabled learning. OER empower teaching staff to develop learning materials that align closely with module learning outcomes, local contexts and the diverse needs of learners.

5.3 The OER Programme contributes to the delivery of the Library's Imagine2035 strategy by advancing the objectives of the Flip to Open anchor. Through the OER Programme, the Library is supporting staff to create, publish, adapt and adopt OER which can reduce barriers to learning and enable the transition to more sustainable, open content.

5.4 The Library recognises the contribution of OER to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly:

- SDG 4: Quality Education by supporting inclusive, equitable and lifelong learning opportunities;
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities by removing financial and access barriers to educational resources;
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production through the reuse and adaptation of existing educational content.

5.5 OER created through the OER Programme must follow the University's digital inclusion and accessibility guidance to support digital inclusion and comply with the latest accessibility regulations. Accessibility should be considered from the outset of the development process. Creators must follow the standards set out in the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (PSBAR 2018) which provides a clear framework for demonstrating compliance with the Equality Act. Teaching staff can contact the Library for support and guidance on making accessible resources at uml.oer@manchester.ac.uk.

5.6 The Library encourages collaborative approaches to OER development, including co-creation with students, educators, professional services staff, and external partners where appropriate. These approaches can enhance the relevance, quality, and impact of OER.

5.7 The Library encourages the creation and sharing of openly licenced educational materials to support teaching, learning and knowledge exchange. Copyright ownership of educational materials remains subject to the University's Intellectual Property regulations set out in the Intellectual Property Policy. At the point of publication, authors must assign a Creative Commons licence to the OER. The Creative Commons licence must be consistent with any institutional intellectual property requirements and the rights of any co-creators or third-party content owners.

5.8 The Library recommends that OER produced through OER Programme should be published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence (CC BY) which is the most open licence that still requires attribution to the original creator. This licence enables the widest possible reuse, adaptation, and redistribution of content, provided that attribution is given to the original creator and work. This licence supports the retain, reuse, revise, remix and redistribute activities described within Wiley's 5R framework.

5.9 The Library acknowledges that there may be cases where authors might choose a more restrictive licence, however as part of our commitment to the open dissemination of knowledge for educational purposes, a work with a No Derivatives component (e.g. CC BY-NC-ND) is not considered an OER because it does not allow for revision or remixing, and therefore may not be supported through the Library's OER Programme.

Version amendment history		
Version	**Date**	**Reason for change**
1.0	October 2026	Original document

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Library Policy on Open Educational Resources (OER)
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Related policies/procedures/guidance etc	University of Manchester Library Reading List Strategy DocID: 42305 University of Manchester Position Statement on Open Research DocID: 55136 Publications Policy DocID: 76067 Intellectual Property Policy DocID=24420
Policy owner:	Helen Foster, Teaching Collections and eTextbook Programme Manager
Lead contact:	Helen Foster, Teaching Collections and eTextbook Programme Manager