Open Educational Resources

What are open educational resources (OER)?

OER are teaching and learning materials that are available for everyone to use — whether they are a teacher, student or self-learner. OER are generally licensed under Creative Commons (CC) licences, and include all forms of copyright material, e.g. images, music, activity sheets, courseware, or textbooks.

Why is OER important?

Teachers are regularly required to produce targeted, engaging resources within demanding time constraints. They search for, share and adapt source material to deliver to their students. When this involves 'all rights reserved' material, it's expensive. In 2016, the Australian Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Treaties heard that the Australian education sector spends approximately $700 million each year on third-party copyright materials. These funds are diverted from other important resources schools need.

In 2012, Australia recognised this and signed the UNESCO Paris OER Declaration, which called on countries to adopt OER as a policy when creating educational resources.

How does OER work?

OER gives teachers the ability to legally adapt and reuse materials, producing the best possible resources for their students, while reducing copyright costs to the education system. For this reason, the QCAA actively works to incorporate OER content into its resources.

The QCAA always references and acknowledges third-party materials, and the licence under which they have been supplied, to encourage teachers to identify and reuse openly licensed material.

How can I license my material for OER?

There are two licences you can apply to your material to help teachers discover, use and develop OER materials for their students:

- Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence (CC BY)
- Creative Commons Attribution-Sharealike 4.0 licence (CC BY-SA).

The CC BY licence allows users to share or adapt your material in any medium or format.

The CC BY-SA licence provides the same permissions as the CC BY licence, but it also requires that any adapted version of your material is licensed under the same CC BY-SA licence.

How do I associate my material with a CC licence?

To let the QCAA know you have applied a CC licence to your material, you can inform us directly, or you can associate the licence with your material using some of the examples below.

Licence	Logo	Text
CC BY		This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence. URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0
CC BY-SA		This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 Licence. URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0

What other benefits do I get from a CC licence?

The CC licences offer a range of additional benefits to typical 'all rights reserved' copyright:

1. Your material is likely to receive more exposure because you have provided your permission upfront.

2. You won't have to respond to requests for copyright permission. Users will know what they can do by noting the licence.

3. You will be acknowledged when your work is reused.

4. The CC licences contain 'no warranty' and 'limitation of liability' clauses.

Why 'free for educational use' is not enough

Some content owners publish their material with a copyright notice claiming their material to be 'free for educational or non-commercial purposes'.

Unfortunately, this type of labelling is unclear and insufficient. Creative Commons licensing is the best way for users to know what they can and cannot do with the material.

More information

For more information about OER and Creative Commons licences, and how they support schools, visit:
- Creative Commons (https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work)
- UNESCO 2012 Paris OER Declaration (https://en.unesco.org/oer/paris-declaration)
- SmartCopying Toolkit for Teachers, Curriculum and E-Learning Developers (https://bit.ly/2FnG6ep)
- Creative Commons — Education and OER Programme Area (https://bit.ly/2UEBC85).

If you have any questions for the QCAA, please contact: copyright@qcaa.qld.edu.au