

Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES DECLARATION¹

1 Preamble

As a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by its pursuit of knowledge and innovation, with a unique institutional culture based upon the values the University espouses, the North-West University commits itself to the appropriate use and promotion of the creation of Open Educational Resources (OER) with this declaration.

Furthermore, this declaration should be regarded in terms of the North-West University's commitment to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, academic excellence, social responsiveness, and an ethic of care; aiming to excel in innovative learning and teaching and pioneering research, thereby benefitting society through knowledge; committed to the development of a comprehensive range of formal academic, professional, vocational and general programmes and informal CE offerings, addressing societal needs; responsive to the well-being of its staff, students and the wider community through optimal interaction, capacity building and sound management practices. Through the use of OER the NWU ties in with the international move towards an openness agenda to educational resources, contributes to greater impact and internationalisation through the online open publication of academic content and contribute to the development of different bodies of scholarship within a context of financial strain, limited capacity, and a requirement for greater access to high quality academic content, grounded in sound research, for students in higher education.

This NWU OER Declaration relates to the creation, reuse, revision, remixing, redistribution and retention of OER within an Open Licensing framework at the NWU. The NWU supports and strives to reward efforts to develop, adopt, integrate, share and research appropriate and high quality OER for use in the delivery of modules of formal academic programmes or continuing education (CE) offerings that lend themselves to such innovation, and will over time, establish an OER repository of high quality.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 Open Educational Resources (OER):** Based on the 2012 Paris OER Declaration (UNESCO, 2012:1)², North-West University interprets OER as quality-assured teaching and learning resources that have been well researched and are created for use 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, thus with as few barriers for the end-user as possible. Open licensing is built within the existing framework of intellectual property rights as defined by relevant international conventions and with due respect to the authorship of the work. OER can include e-textbooks, documents, digital images, videos, collections of files, software tools, learning objects, etc.
- 2.2 OER Creation:** The development/production and online sharing of quality-assured OER.
- 2.3 OER Adoption:** A practice of adopting existing OER for use in a formal module or CE offering without any change.

¹ Senate approved on 14-03-2018

² UNESCO. (2012). *2012 Paris OER Declaration*. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/WPFD2009/English_Declaration.html

- 2.4 OER Integration:** This is viewed as a logical and systematic approach to the “five R’s” (Hilton *et al.*, 2010)³ of reusing, revising, remixing, redistributing and retaining of OER.
- 2.5 OER Sharing:** Making OER freely accessible, especially online.
- 2.6 Content Developer:** A person with specialist knowledge and skill within a particular area of study (typically an academic author) engaged in the development of teaching and learning materials used by the institution.
- 2.7 Copyrights:** 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 as per copyright law of South Africa. Unless otherwise stated in a contract, the author or creator of a work retains the copyright. The author(s) retains the moral rights to assign the rights to any other person or legal entity, and share the materials with others in any other conditions he/she may desire.
- 2.8 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”.⁴
- 2.9 Institutional Repository:** a set of services offered by an institution “to the members of its community for the management and dissemination of digital materials created by the institution and its community members. It is most essentially an organisational commitment to the stewardship of these digital materials, including long-term preservation where appropriate, as well as organisation and access or distribution”⁵.

3 Declaration

3.1 Declaration

The North-West University supports and promotes the creation, reuse, revision, remixing, redistribution and retention of OER for appropriate modules of formal academic programmes and for CE offerings within an Open Licensing framework.

3.2 Statements

- 3.2.1 As far as is reasonably possible, NWU Management promotes, fosters and rewards efforts towards the creation, adoption, integration, sharing and researching of high quality OER in formal and informal academic offerings, teaching and learning development, quality assurance and delivery.
- 3.2.2 The NWU believes that through openly sharing high quality teaching and learning resources, the notion of education as a public good, rather than just a private benefit, can be put into action, and over time with a sizable reduction in costs and relief for capacity constraints.
- 3.2.3 The NWU shares in the commitment to improving the quality of the educational experience of students through the appropriate creation, reuse, revision, remixing, redistribution and retention of OER.
- 3.2.4 Unless otherwise specified by an academic/School/Faculty/Division, the NWU supports free and open access to the educational content it owns or co-owns, provided that proper permissions are obtained and with the necessary acknowledgement of intellectual property rights of authors/artists/content developers.
- 3.2.5 The NWU, as publisher and copyrights owner, decides on the content to be published as OER in consultation with the relevant Faculty/School/Division.
- 3.2.6 Within the spirit and context of the NWU Teaching and Learning strategy, academic and academic support staff are, as far as is reasonably possible, committed to building capacity and positive attitudes for effective creation, adoption and integration of OER in the development and delivery of formal and informal academic offerings.

³ Hilton, J., Wiley, D., Stein, J., & Johnson, A. (2010). The four R's of openness and ALMS Analysis: Frameworks for open educational resources. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open and Distance Learning*, 25(1), 37-44.

⁴ <http://opendefinition.org/guide/>

⁵ Lynch, C.A. (2003). Institutional Repositories: Infrastructure for Scholarship in the Digital Age, ARL 226, Retrieved from <http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/arl-br-226.pdf>

- 3.2.7 The NWU acknowledges the need for support and training of academics and academic support staff in the development, adoption, reuse, sharing and quality monitoring OER.
- 3.2.8 The NWU acknowledges that OER cannot always replace tried and tested academic text books and will sometimes be used in addition to these trusted resources.
- 3.2.9 OER is essential to strengthen a knowledge economy and to enhance access to a diverse teaching and learning materials offering of high quality.

3.3 Objectives

The objectives of the declaration are to:

- 3.3.1 Conduct research, coordinated by the UNESCO Research Chair for OER and Multimodal learning⁶, on the OER creation, adoption, adaptation and integration within an institutional, South African and African context. An additional specific focus will be on the affordances of OER in terms of multimodal learning and multi-literacies pedagogy⁷ which would acknowledge and accommodate diversity and multilingualism⁸.
- 3.3.2 Maintain and expand intellectual OER networks such as OERu, OER Africa and the OER Network as well as related UNESCO Research Chairs with OER as focus.
- 3.3.3 Formulate the necessary strategic inputs, outputs, tasks and performance indicators to achieve OER creation, adoption, adaptation and integration in the development/delivery of formal academic programmes and CE courses;
- 3.3.4 Develop an awareness about and offer support and training for the concept and practices related to OER among all staff;
- 3.3.5 Build capacity among academic and academic support staff to use OER appropriately in their professional engagements and promote OER in institution-wide initiatives such as the Teaching Excellence Award (TEA);
- 3.3.6 Prepare institutional policies, guidelines and manuals for OER creation, adoption, adaptation and integration considering all relevant legal requirements;
- 3.3.7 Establish an institutional repository to manage, quality assure and share OER;
- 3.3.8 Continuously monitor and ensure that the policies, guidelines and manuals are implemented effectively;
- 3.3.9 Consider the role of information communication technology infrastructure and information management as two essential aspects of OER as the risk exists that there might be academic willingness, even eagerness, but system limitations;
- 3.3.10 Develop and incorporate an effective feedback mechanism that will facilitate informed decisions for any mid-term corrections during OER implementation;
- 3.3.11 Consider and incorporate changes to the process based on new developments in the field of OER and the circumstances of the institution; and
- 3.3.12 Establish communities of practice within Faculties, Schools and support departments to facilitate the effective creation, adoption, adaptation and integration of OER.

3.4 Scope and Applicability

Unless notified by the North-West University as an exclusion, this OER declaration is applicable to:

- 3.4.1 All academic and academic support departments of the North-West University;
- 3.4.2 All content developers within the institution and those engaged by the institution on temporary/contract basis;

⁶ The application for the *UNESCO Research Chair for OER and Multimodal learning* is currently under way with a formal submission to UNESCO planned in April 2018.

⁷ The New London Group, 1996. A pedagogy of multi-literacies: Designing social futures. *Harvard educational review*, 66(1):60-93.

⁸ In this regard, the Paris OER Declaration states that “the development and adaptation of OER in a variety of languages and cultural contexts” must be encouraged.

- 3.4.3 As far as is reasonable, all types of teaching and learning materials released in physical or electronic format;
- 3.4.4 In cases where the material is developed in collaboration/partnership with other institutions, the guidelines governing the collaboration/partnership as indicated in the MOU/MOA will prevail. However, any such agreement should duly consider this OER declaration before any deviation is agreed upon and approved by the competent authority of the institution.

3.5 Quality Assurance and Review System

- 3.5.1 An OER Committee will be established to manage and oversee the development of the OER repository.
- 3.5.2 The OER Committee will constitute the following members: Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Director Quality **Office**, Director: Information Technology; Deputy Deans: Teaching and Learning, Director: Curriculum transformation and ICT integration, Manager: Physical and Virtual TL spaces support, representation from the NWU Library Services and any number of OER experts nominated by Faculties on a rotation basis.
- 3.5.3 The OER repository will strive to provide quality-assured resources.
- 3.5.4 Learning resources developed by the institution through peer reviewing and strict quality assurance mechanisms built into the course development process will not require further review prior to uploading on to the OER repository. All other contributions will be peer reviewed within the relevant School or Faculty before uploading on the OER repository.
- 3.5.5 The Senate Committee for Teaching and Learning will be notified by the OER Committee to review policies, guidelines and manuals as well as the production, delivery and access of OER on a predetermined schedule as required by the quality procedures of the institution.
- 3.5.6 The OER Committee will adopt a set of quality assurance (QA) guidelines and indicators to help lecturers focus on the quality of OER.
- 3.5.7 The OER Committee will serve a three year term, and will report annually to Senate through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning.

3.6 Liability

- 3.6.1 All OER materials in the institutional repository will carry a disclaimer indicating that the material is for educational purposes only and that the North-West University absolves itself of any practical misuse of the OER materials or their content. OER materials authored and published by staff of the North-West University do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the North-West University. The disclaimer will have the following format:

The publication is released for educational purposes, and all information provided on an 'as is' basis. Although the author and publisher have made every effort to ensure that the information in this publication was correct at the time of press, the author and publisher do not assume and hereby disclaim any liability to any party for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause. Any views expressed in the publication are that of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the North-West University. All products and services mentioned are owned by their respective copyrights holders, and mere presentation in the publication does not mean endorsement by the North-West University. Derivatives of this work are not authorised to use logo of the North-West University. Acknowledgement of intellectual property must be made.

- 3.6.2 OER will be made available through the OER repository under a Creative Commons (CC) license⁹. The license declaration on the OER will be in the following format:

© 20XX North-West University. Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons [specify the Creative Commons license to be used]. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/licensing-types-examples/licensing-examples/>

- 3.6.3 An additional caveat will indicate that derivatives of this work are not authorized to use the institution's logo without prior written authorisation from the institution.

3.7 Institutional Arrangements

- 3.7.1 The OER produced by the North-West University will be hosted in an institutional repository.
- 3.7.2 Capacity building will be conducted for stakeholders engaged in OER creation, adoption, adaptation and integration, specifically through the support of the UNESCO Research Chair for OER and Multimodal learning.
- 3.7.3 Regular updates and training on new developments in the field of OER will be provided by the NWU's Centre for Teaching and Learning in cooperation with the UNESCO Research Chair for OER and Multimodal learning.

⁹ <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/licensing-types-examples/licensing-examples/>