

OER Policy

Open Educational Resources Policy – University of Passau

This Policy sets out the position of the University of Passau on Open Educational Resources (OER) and their role in the continuous development of teaching and learning. It is addressed to all members of the University and serves as a binding framework for the creation, use and publication of OER. At the same time, it lays the foundations for a culture of sharing, making accessible and reusing open educational materials in higher education.

OER are defined as teaching and learning materials of any kind and in any medium that are either in the public domain or have been released under an open licence. This licence permits free access as well as free use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or only minor restrictions. As a rule, the authors (or creators) themselves determine which rights of use they grant and which they reserve.¹

The University of Passau seeks to integrate the use and creation of quality-assured open educational materials into everyday teaching and to contribute proactively to the dissemination of scholarly knowledge through the public provision of OER. This takes place within the broader context of Open Science and in alignment with the Open Access Strategy as well as the teaching, sustainability and transfer strategies of the University.

OER for Educational Equity and Sustainable Development

OER facilitate free and equitable access to high-quality educational content. They promote a culture of sharing and collaboration in which knowledge is collectively developed and made durably accessible, thus contributing significantly to the democratisation of education, resource efficiency and the strengthening of sustainable educational infrastructures. The University of Passau affirms its commitment to the importance of OER in advancing educational equity, particularly in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (SDG 4).

OER for Discourse on Teaching and Open Educational Practices

The University of Passau views OER as an opportunity to foster open, cross-university exchange in teaching and to stimulate creative and innovative teaching and learning processes. It supports collegial exchange on Open Educational Practices (OEP)² and their continuous development. Through the joint development and use of OER, academic staff and students can shape teaching and learning environments together, learn from one another and better address individual needs.

¹ Based on the definitions of OER by the German UNESCO Commission (DUK) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK; Senate resolution 2016)

² Open Educational Practices refer to engagement with open educational resources, namely their dissemination, use and application.

OER for Internationalisation, Funding Acquisition and Knowledge Transfer

OER enhance the visibility and international standing of the University of Passau with regard to teaching, research and knowledge transfer, thereby strengthening its reputation as an innovative, welcoming and responsible educational institution. In this context, OER also play an important role as deliverables in the allocation of funding for teaching and research. They further promote lifelong and self-directed learning as well as interdisciplinary exchange between universities and schools, other educational institutions and society at large.

OER as a Hallmark of Excellent Teaching

The University of Passau attaches great importance to the quality of OER and is guided in this by UNESCO's internationally established quality dimensions. The quality assurance process takes into account subject content, technical, formal and pedagogical aspects as well as legal requirements. The primary responsibility for this lies with the authors (or creators) themselves and can – in the spirit of openness – be supplemented by measures such as voluntary peer-review procedures and the integration of feedback loops with users.

Licensing OER

The University recommends the use of Creative Commons licences for self-created OER – particularly “CC BY” (attribution) or “CC BY-SA” (attribution, share alike) licences – to ensure international openness and reusability. Publication as OER is voluntary. The copyright of the authors (or creators) remains unaffected.

Developing and Recognising OER Engagement

The University of Passau expressly encourages all its members to use, create and publish OER. It supports them in this endeavour with appropriate information and self-learning resources, as well as a central website that provides guidance on pedagogical, legal and technical questions relating to OER.

Moreover, the University's higher-education teaching and media-didactics units, in cooperation with internal and external partners, offer tailored training courses for building OER competencies.

To publish and promote the visibility of open educational materials from Passau, the University primarily uses established repositories and referrers (OER search engines) – such as OER@vhb. This ensures that OER meet high quality standards, are readily discoverable and remain accessible over the long term.

The University of Passau recognises the creation and provision of OER as a valuable contribution to the further development of teaching and scholarly communication. As such, open educational practices may be considered in the award of teaching prizes and other funding programmes for innovative university teaching.