



LAWEH
OPEN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

**OER
POLICY**

Education Without Barriers

Definition

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are simply teaching and learning materials that are freely accessible and available online for everyone to use, whether you are an instructor, student or self-learner. It can also be defined as teaching, learning and research resources available for free access and use with no or limited restrictions. The term "open educational resources" was first adopted at UNESCO's 2002 Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries.

Purpose of Policy

This policy essentially summarizes the University's position on Open Educational Resources (OERs) and provides guidelines for practice in learning and teaching. The University encourages staff and students to use, create, and publish OERs to enhance the quality of the student experience, boost the provision of learning opportunities for all, and improve teaching practices. It also recognizes that the use, creation, and publication of OERs are consistent with the University's reputation, values, and mission to "make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to open higher education in Ghana, Africa and the world the at large, promoting leadership, innovation, flexibility and entrepreneurship through Open Supported Learning approach".

Overview

In accordance with best practices, this document provides background, University position and guidance for the use of OERs in learning and teaching at the Laweh Open University College.

Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy applies to all students and staff in the University. It is overseen by the Academic Committee for teaching and learning.

Background

Laweh Open University College is devoted to participating in a scholarly community characterized by world class teaching, research and practice across a range of disciplines in open education. We promote and support the development and continuous improvement of our courses and programmes to provide our students with the optimum and flexible learning experience, which is distinctively a Laweh experience.

For us, students in Open education paradigm are like “free range chickens who look for information and learn on their own”. It is against this background that the University embraces the whole idea of OERs in order to promote knowledge sharing, enhance teaching and learning experience of students and educators, facilitate ongoing curriculum renewal and also market the University.

Our staff use a wide range of self-generated teaching materials to support exceptional teaching, including teaching notes, videos, audio, simulation, images, animations, multimedia materials and others. Staff also provide students with resources generated from elsewhere within the University to support learning, for example from the University library, museums and collections. In addition, resources are available from beyond the University to support student learning. These may include images, audio/video resources, animations and other digital resources.

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are digital resources that are used in the context of teaching and learning (e.g. course material, images, video, multimedia resources, assessment items, etc.), which have been released by the copyright holder under an open license (e.g. Creative Commons) permitting their use or re-purposing (re-use, revision, remixing, redistribution) by others. Staff and students at Laweh Open University may wish to use OERs to promote effective and flexible teaching and learning whilst contributing to “a vast pool of educational resources on the Internet, open and free for all to use. The very essence is to create a world where each and every person on earth can access and contribute to the sum of all human knowledge

University's Position

1. The University encourages staff and students to use, create and publish OERs to improve the quality of teaching and learning, provided that the resources are fit- for-purpose and relevant.
2. Use, creation and publication of OERs are consistent with the University's reputation, values and mission to "to provide a world-class learner centered open higher education that produce effective and ethical leaders who shall create and deliver values to meet the needs of societies."
3. The University expects that OERs used, created or published by individual staff and students will normally be single units or small collections (e.g. podcast episodes, small collection of images etc.).
4. Whether or not OERs are used or published in the University, it is ultimately a decision for the Academic committee. Unless stated to the contrary, it is assumed that use, creation and publication of single units or small collections will be allowed. Where use, creation and publication are to be restricted, Academic committee are encouraged to identify and communicate a rationale for restriction. It is expected that justifications for restriction will normally be based on protection of commercial interests.
5. University policies on IPR must be adhered to. When using OERs, students and staff must comply with the terms of the license of use. (eg. Creative Commons)
6. All OERs used and created must comply with the University policy on Accessible and Inclusive Learning:
7. The University reserves the right to remove resources that do not comply with its policies, and/or request removal of resources from external repositorie

Guidance

1. It is the responsibility of staff and students to ensure that they have the necessary rights to publish an OER and that all resources published comply with all relevant policies (e.g. copyright, IPR, accessibility).
2. Staff and students are advised to publish OERs using a Creative Commons attribution license (CC BY). Other Creative Commons licenses (for example to add a non-commercial use or share-alike element) may be used if the creators feel this is necessary or appropriate for their particular resource, or to comply with the license of any third party content used in the resource.
3. When creating and publishing OERs, the copyright owner(s), author(s), date and Creative Commons license applied must be visibly attributed. The copyright owner will normally be the University of Edinburgh for OERs created at the University. Author(s) should also be properly acknowledged, giving recognition for work undertaken, along with date and Creative Commons license applied so that others can clearly understand what permissions for reuse are being granted.

An example of good attribution would be: © [Author Name], Laweh Open University
2016 CC BY

4. The University recommends that written and interactive digital teaching resources should be published in an appropriate repository or public-access website in order

to maximize discovery and use by others. Where OERs have been created as part of an externally funded activity, any storage and/or repository locations mandated as a condition of the funding should be used.

5. The University recommends that audio/video based OER teaching resources should be published in the University's multimedia repository.
6. Staff and students are encouraged to collect data where possible on usage of their OERs.
7. Where students are producing OERs as part of their programme of study or within a staff directed project, these guidelines should be followed and OERs should be checked by a member of staff before publication.