





# Creating Affordable Access to Education

## KNOWLEDGE SHARED

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The Open Education Resource universitas (OERu) has developed a parallel learning universe with a scalable and sustainable international ecosystem; augmenting traditional education models and delivering value through open, collaborative networks without compromising or infringing upon existing student cohorts: bringing new prospects to your institution without interrupting your current processes. The business model used to realise this ambitious goal was developed iteratively through consultative inputs at regional international meetings under the guidance of Creative Commons.

This document introduces the core components of the OERu Business Model Canvas, specifically as it pertains to Customer Segments, Value Propositions, Social Good, and Revenue Streams. Should you have questions after reading this primer, we encourage you to schedule a web meeting ([OERU.org/invite](https://OERU.org/invite)) with the OERu executive team to have your questions answered as best suits the needs and requirements of your particular institution.

*“OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others”*

- Hewlett.org





# VALUE PROPOSITIONS

## Low Cost. Low Risk. High Impact.

The OERu envisions a world in which learners – including those who have been traditionally excluded from the formal education sector – can benefit from affordable access to higher education. Via a low-cost, low-barrier pathway to formal education, OERu uses open education channels to create high-impact innovation; developing learning literacies for a digital era for anyone.

## International. Intercultural. Interconnected.

OERu is collaboratively refining a global system for effective credit transfer, while following existing institutional policies, that enables the development of efficient pathways with globally recognised qualifications. OERu partners have collectively approved guidelines for international credit transfer and credit accumulation for an “assessment-only” service, based on open online courses designed for independent study. OERu courses typically attract learners from 50+ countries, providing substantial value to the partnership and facilitating opportunities to deliver an international and intercultural experience for your own learners.





# SOCIAL GOOD

## Sharing is Caring

Partnership with OERu aligns with many institutions' community service goals: building more sustainable education systems using OER and leveraging current network models to provide open source education for the communities we serve, without compromising the fiscal sustainability of the publicly-funded tertiary sector.

*"The OERu's core mission is to widen access to more affordable education with pathways to achieve credible qualifications especially for learners currently excluded from the privilege of a tertiary education"*

*– Emeritus Professor Jim Taylor, member of the Board of the Open Education Resource Foundation, and Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL)*





# CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

## Reaching an Unreachable Market

There are four formal target markets for OERu, and the majority of these prospective learners typically fall outside the existing catchment of post-secondary institutions around the world. Without OERu and its international network of innovative partners, these learners would likely miss any opportunity to gain the qualifications required to improve their circumstances.

### 1 **Adult Independent Learners** *Studying for formal credit*

Learners in this category may include the socio-economic disadvantaged, including refugees and migrants, or international students preparing for local national study. This segment may also include mature learners studying for their first degree; second-chance learners working towards degree completion; and professionals seeking Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) to fill gaps within their current skills.

### 2 **Try-Before-You-Buy** *May convert to formal credit*

The potential for anonymous study is an advantageous by-product of the OERu model, providing a safety-net to learners who aren't sure if they're ready for post-secondary education.

They may be part of a marginalised population or the first in their family with access to higher learning. The open model gives them the ability to take extra time before attempting the assessment, and anonymity allows them to fail without losing face.

### 3 **Professional Development** *Micro-credentials*

Professionals interested in upgrading/ updating their existing skills generally don't require formal credit, but are interested in gaining micro-credentials through the OERu's competency-based assessment model. Some partners are trialling Open Badges to provide opportunities for learners to differentiate themselves professionally.

### 4 **Informal Learners** *Self-Motivated*

This group consists of lifelong learners following their passion and seeking self-directed topics.

## International Brand Promotion

Organisations interested in collaborating with the OERu and its international network of partners on a recognised OER project are another potential audience.



# PARTNER REVENUE STREAMS

## Return on Investment

The OERu is a philanthropic, non-profit organisation managed transparently via the OER Foundation. The OERu does not generate any revenue from student services; membership fees fund the OERF shared infrastructure that supports the OERu network. Additional funds collected through membership fees are used to create or develop new content and courses for delivery via OERu.

OERu works on a cost-recovery model, with no 'new money' required from partner institutions. Courses are created by reallocating existing staff time to assemble two courses using existing OER and open access materials. Recurrent cost for partners providing assessment services are covered through a fee-for-service model.

## Improved Revenue

In addition to accessing previously unreachable revenue streams, partner institutions reduce course design costs and effectively demonstrate their innovative leadership by using an open education approach with selected courses.

## Improved Reputation

Partnership with OERu includes access to a global network of like-minded institutions focusing on international thought leadership, open educational practices, and developing new models for financial sustainability and institutional growth.

*OERu partners retain decision-making authority over all aspects of assessment, including pricing.*

# Join our International Network of Innovative Institutions

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An effective partnership with OERu supports community service initiatives; provides a commanding presence in the OER space; and introduces learners to additional programs available through mainstream channels at partner institutions. Becoming an active and engaged member of an internationally recognised OER initiative, as an OERu partner, demonstrates your institution's commitment to sustainable education and innovation, while providing access to a previously untapped revenue stream.

Membership costs are negligible, typically \$4000USD per year, with a designated 0.2 FTE to assemble two courses based on OER and open access materials linked to academic credit at their institution. Learners pay assessment fees to OERu partners to cover recurrent operational costs.

OERu partners retain decision-making autonomy; the fees charged will vary for each institution and are not dictated by the OERu network. OERu partners are not expected to implement open policies for all courses.

*To learn more about the OERu, and how it can be used to improve global prestige and revenues for your institution, we invite you to join us for a web-based discussion with members of our executive team.*

**VISIT [OERU.ORG/INVITE](https://oeru.org/invite) TO LEARN MORE**





# OERu.org



This business model canvas is designed and licensed openly, enabling institutions to adapt and evolve the strategy as best fits their individual requirements. We've created this model to best serve the needs of OERu, but it is easily adaptable for use by any of our partner institutions, and follows a logical model that can be used to outline the right model for you and your team to define your targets, expectations, and strategies in regards to open education.

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