

Benchmarking OER Use and Assessment in Higher Education

Survey Background

Please note that, as this is a small-scale study, the findings will be indicative and will only tell a small part of a much bigger story. However, we hope that they will provide a useful reference point for discussion within and between institutions about collaborative initiatives in open education.

Members of the OERu network will also be directed to further survey questions, which will enable a contextual evaluation for the partners participating in the implementation of the (OERu) concept.

This study has two main aims:

1) To identify key institutional policies and practices that support the successful implementation of formal assessment and accreditation services for informal learning based solely on open educational resources (OER), with reference to recommendations provided by an “experts” group within the OER university network.

The OERu is a collaborative partnership of higher education institutions aiming to provide such services to informal learners on a mass scale.

2) To enable institutions that are not members of the OERu to determine their compatibility with the OERu concept, in other words, to identify aspects of current policies and practices at their institutions that would hinder or support the implementation of sustainable assessment and accreditation initiatives based on OERs, in collaboration with other institutions.

To accomplish this, the survey is targeted at two groups of participants:

- Higher education Institutions that are officially members of the OERu network (also known as the OERTen partner institutions).
- Higher education institutions that are not members of the OERu.

Many of the questions in this survey are derived from a series of interviews carried out with individuals from institutions participating in the OER university (OERu) network. The findings from the two groups will be compared and results will be used to develop the compatibility indicators for the OERu concept.

After you have completed the survey, you will receive a PDF containing your responses, that can be used as a comparative tool against the benchmarks that will be released once the diagnostic index is completed.

Important notes

An option to save your survey questions and return at a later stage has been enabled and a link placed on top of the banner of this survey.

If you select this option you will be requested to supply an email address.

A unique link will be emailed to you that will allow you to return to your survey at a later stage where you left off.

Important notes:

1. All results will be confidential unless you state that you wish your responses to be attributed to you.
2. In no circumstances will your contact details be passed to any third party or made available publicly.
3. All publications relating to this study are released under an open licence (Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY)).
4. It is permissible for more than one person from an organisation to respond to the survey. It is accepted that individual responses do not necessarily represent institution-wide policy.
5. As an open research project you agree to dedicate your responses to the public domain. The data collected from this research project will be made available with personal information removed as open data for reuse by the open research community.

Definitions of OER and OERu

Definition of Open Educational Resources (OER):

Open Educational Resources (OER) are materials used to support education that may be freely accessed, reused, modified and shared by anyone (Downes 2011). For the purposes of this study, the concept of OER is inclusive of Open Educational Practices (OEP) associated with the design, development and delivery of courses based solely on OER.

Background to the OERu concept:

The OERu is a global partnership in which several higher education institutions are collaborating to offer free learning using courses based solely on OERs and low-cost assessment and accreditation services towards formal academic credit on a mass scale. Currently there are 15 institutions in the partnership.

The key reasons given by OERu partner institutions for their participation in the OERu are:

- An opportunity to market the institution as a world leader in higher education
- Gathering evidence on a potentially more sustainable way of delivering higher education
- Widening participation in higher education
- Meeting workplace needs (in partnership with industry and government bodies)
- Collaboration with other accredited HEIs worldwide for the purposes of benchmarking practices, enabling staff development, improving quality, learning from other world leaders, and offering students a wider range of programmes to choose from.

Institution / Organisation Information

Q1. May we name your institution in a list of all institutions that have responded to the survey for the final report?

Yes

No

Q2. Name of your institution / organisation? (please write the name in full)

Q3. Which of the following categories best describes the capacity in which you are responding?

Executive management

Senior manager

Manager

Practitioner (including lecturer teacher, trainer, designer, developer, project worker)

Researcher

Other (please specify): _____

Q4. What is the name of your department?

Q5. Country where your institution is located

United Kingdom

United States

South Africa

Australia
 New Zealand
 Canada
 India
 Other (specify)

Institution / Organisation Information

Q6. How would you classify the organisation or institution that you work for? *(Select all that apply)*

- Secondary institution
- Vocational training provider
- Institute of technology / TAFE / Polytechnic university
- University or 4-year Community College
- 3-year Community College
- Non-teaching organisation
- Not-for profit organisation
- Public organisation
- Other

Please specify the type of organisation you work for:

SKIP LOGIC: IF The answer to Question 6 is in list Non-teaching organisation skip to Q19.

Tertiary Institution Information

Q7. Which of the following credentials does your institution have the authority to confer in accordance with local accreditation requirements? *Please select all that apply*

- Certificate
- Diploma
- Advanced Diploma
- Associate Degree / Foundation degree
- Bachelors Degree
- Postgraduate Certificate
- Postgraduate Diploma
- Postgraduate Degree (including Masters, Doctorate)
- Other (please specify)
-

Tertiary Institution Information

Open Universities are notable for having an open entry policy, i.e. students' previous academic achievements are not taken into account for entry to most undergraduate courses.

Q8. Which of the following apply to your institution? *Please select all that apply*

- Open university (open entry policy)
- Not an open institution but have open entry policy for some courses
- Distance learning institution
- On-campus institution
- Other (Please specify)

Q9. Approximately how many students are enrolled in your institution?

- Less than 10 000
- 10 001 - 20 000
- 20 001 - 40 000
- 40 001 - 60 000
- 60 001 - 100 000
- 100 001+

Institutional Landscape - Accreditation Activities

These next questions ask you to provide information on current policy. Please answer as best you can. At the end of this section you can let us know how reliable you think your answers are

Q10. How actively does your institution currently participate in the following accreditation activities?

Please rate on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = no participation in this activity and 5 = central to what my institution does

	1 - No participation	2	3	4	5 - Central to my institution	Unsure / Don't Know
My institution has policies and procedures in place for recognition of prior learning <i>(RPL, also known as APEL – Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning, and PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition)</i>						
My institution offers Challenge Exams <i>(i.e. exams that anyone can take and receive accreditation for without having enrolled for tuition)</i>						
My institution collaborates with employers to provide workplace-based assessment for learners						

Q11. Please use this textbox for adding any additional comments or information if required

Q12. How confident are you that your answers to the previous questions reflect your organisation's policies and practices?

Not very confident

1

2

3

4

5

Very confident

Institutional Landscape - Student Support

These next questions ask you to provide information on current policy. Please answer as best you can. At the end of this section you can let us know how reliable you think your answers are

Q13. Please rate how actively your institution currently participates in the following activities to support learners.

Please rate on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = no participation in this activity and 5 = central to what my institution does

	1 - No participation	2	3	4	5 - Central to my institution	Unsure / Don't Know
My institution makes use of open access and externally hosted social networking platform(s) (<i>outside of the institutional virtual learning environment or learning management system</i>) to enable peer learning support						
My institution has relationships with workplace or community organisations that support (<i>or could support</i>) learners in their studies.						
My institution uses analytics to enable the provision of automated support to students <i>(e.g. to build up an FAQ database or provide customised messages to students in an automated fashion).</i>						
My institution uses volunteers to provide certain aspects of student support <i>(e.g. postgraduate students giving feedback to undergraduate students; retired academics or alumni contributing to subject-specific discussion forums)</i>						

Q14. Please use this textbox for adding any additional comments or information if required

Q15. How confident are you that your answers to the previous questions reflect your organisation's policies and practices?

Not very confident

1

2

3

4

5

Very confident

Institutional Landscape - Credit Transfer

These next questions ask you to provide information on current policy. Please answer as best you can. At the end of this section you can let us know how reliable you think your answers are

Q16. Which of the following options best describe your institution's practice with regard to credit transfer?

My institution does not recognise transfer credit for credits obtained at **other** institutions

My institution can award a credential (e.g. diploma or degree), as long as more than 60% of the credits are awarded by **my institution**

My institution can award a credential (e.g. diploma or degree), as long as at least 50-60% of the credits are awarded by **my institution**

My institution can award a credential even in cases where more than 60% of the credits have been obtained from **other institutions** that are recognised by my institution

I don't know

Q17. Please use this textbox for adding any additional comments or information if required

Q18. How confident are you that your answers to the previous questions reflect your organisation's policies and practices?

Not very confident

1

2

3

4

5

Very confident

Knowledge about OERs

Open Educational Resources (OER) are materials used to support education that may be freely accessed, reused, modified and shared by anyone (Downes 2011). For the purposes of this study, the concept of OER is inclusive of Open Educational Practices (OEP) associated with the design, development and delivery of courses based solely on OER.

Please rate your awareness on a scale from 1-5 where 1 = not at all (never heard of before today) to 5 = to a large extent (very knowledgeable)

Q19. Before today, how knowledgeable were you about Open Educational Resources (OERs)?

Not very knowledgeable

1

2
3
4
5

Very knowledgeable

SKIP LOGIC: IF The answer to Question 19 is exactly equal to 1 then skip to Q52.

Knowledge about the OERu

The OER university or OERu is a global partnership in which several higher education institutions are collaborating to offer free learning using courses based solely on OERs and low-cost assessment and accreditation services towards formal academic credit on a mass scale.

Please rate your awareness on a scale from 1-5 where 1 = not at all (never heard of before today) to 5 = to a large extent (very knowledgeable)

Q20. Before today, how knowledgeable were you about the OER university (OERu)?

Not very knowledgeable

1
2
3
4
5

Very knowledgeable

Q21. Is your institution actively involved in the OERu network? i.e. an OERu anchor partner or a member of the OERten

Yes

No

I don't know

SKIP LOGIC: IF The answer to Question 5 is in list United Kingdom AND The answer to Question 21 is in list No or I don't know then skip to Q27.

Interest in OERs and OERu

The OER university or OERu is a global partnership in which several higher education institutions are collaborating to offer free learning using courses based solely on OERs and low-cost assessment and accreditation services towards formal academic credit on a mass scale.

Q22. To what extent are you interested in the mainstream adoption of OERs in the formal education sector?

Not at all

1
2



3

4

5

To a large extent

Q23. To what extent are you interested in the OER university initiative?

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

To a large extent

Q24. Please use this textbox for adding any additional comments or information if required

Participation in the OERu

Q25. In which of the following capacities are you currently participating in the OERu? (Select all that apply) Institutional representative of a OERu anchor partner Institutional representative of a prospective OERu anchor partner In my individual capacity as active OERu volunteer (eg course development or learner support) As an interested person contributing to OERu planning discussions Interested observer Not currently participating in the OERu Other (Please specify)**In which of the following capacities are you potentially interested in participating in the OERu in future? (Select all that apply)** Institutional representative of a OERu anchor partner Institutional representative of a prospective OERu anchor partner In my individual capacity as active OERu volunteer (eg course development or learner support) As an interested person contributing to OERu planning discussions Interested observer Not interested in participating in the OERu Other (Please specify)**Q26. Please use this textbox for adding any additional comments or information if required**

Institutional participation in the OERu

To what extent did the following factors impact on your institution's decision to join a collaborative OER accreditation initiative such as the OERu Network?

To what extent would the following factors impact on your institution's decision to join a collaborative OER accreditation initiative such as the OERu Network?

Q27. Please rate on a scale of 1 – No impact at all, to 5 – Significant impact

	1 - No Impact	2	3	4	5 - Significant Impact	Unsure / Don't Know	Not Applicable
Philanthropic, i.e. widening access to more affordable education opportunities for learners excluded from the post-secondary system community as a service							
Potential to reduce cost and save time associated with the development of learning materials							
Participation in an international network of accredited institutions							
Low risk innovation strategy							
Opportunity to increase local student enrolment from learners who start out by studying using free learning courses and later decide to complete their degree studies as fee-paying students at my institution							
International marketing of my institution							
Opportunity to diversify revenue streams by incorporating value-added services (such as packaged / optional tutorial services in addition to assessment and credential services) associated with free learning courses							
Testing OER collaboration models as a low risk project in a rapidly changing market							
Using OER collaboration models as a learning environment for improving teaching practice in online learning at my institution							
Retain competitive advantage as OER collaboration models becomes more mainstream							

Q28. Are there any other reasons?

Q29. How confident are you that your answers to the previous questions reflect your organisation's views?

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

To a large extent

Involvement in OER initiatives

These next questions ask you to provide information on current policy. Please answer as best you can. At the end of this section you can let us know how reliable you think your answers are

Q30. How actively does your institution currently participate in activities to support the development and use of Open Educational Resources?

Please rate on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = no participation in this activity and 5 = central to what my institution does

	1 - No participation	2	3	4	5 - Central to my institution	Unsure / Don't Know	Not Applicable
My institution publishes open educational resources (OERs) - i.e. makes learning materials freely available on the Web under an open licence							
Collaborative development of OERs with people in other institutions							
Use of OERs developed by other institutions or organisations							
Provision of courses based solely on OERs							

Q31. How confident are you that your answers to the previous questions reflect your organisation's policies and practices?

Not very confident

1

2

3

4

5

Very confident

Q32. Please use this textbox for adding any additional comments or information if required

SKIP LOGIC: If The answer to Question 6 is in list Non-teaching organisation AND The answer to Question 25 not in list Institutional representative of a OERu anchor partner then skip to Q51.

Assessment services for courses based on OERs

Includes assessment services for courses to be used in the OERu

Q33. Does your institution currently provide assessment services for courses based solely on OERs?

Yes

No

Unsure

IF YES: How likely is your institution to provide assessment services for courses based solely on OERs in the future?

Not at all likely

1
2
3
4
5

Unsure / Don't Know

Very likely

Q34. Please use this textbox for adding any additional comments or information if required

SKIP LOGIC: IF The answer to Question 25 not in list Institutional representative of a OERu anchor partner then skip to Q47.

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Q35. In your opinion, which of the following assessment methods are most likely to be used in the future by OERu partner institutions or institutions assessing learning outcomes of courses based solely on OERs for formal assessment towards credentials?

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Extensively used	Unsure / Don't Know
Workplace assessment (in partnership with employers)						
Same assessment as for fee-paying students						
Proctored examinations						
Course-based portfolio						
Automated online assessment						
Use of volunteer assessors						
Recognition of prior learning portfolio assessment						
Practicums (e.g. Art portfolio, lab work, trades practicums for plumbers, carpenters etc.)						

Q36. Will any other methods of assessment be used? Please provide any comments:

Effectiveness of Student Support Options

Q37. How effective do you consider each of these student support options to be for students participating in OER courses?

	Not at all effective	2	3	4	Very effective	Unsure / Don't Know
Use of volunteers for providing content specific support						
Use of volunteers for general learning support and study skills						
Use of volunteers for technology support						
Integrating peer-to-peer learning support models						
Designing systems for senior students to volunteer support for junior students						
Retired academic volunteers						

Volunteer support from professional bodies						
Granting official credit through community service learning courses for supporting OERu learners						
Institutional recognition in staff appraisals for providing volunteer support						
Use of volunteers for assessment of courses						

OERu Evaluation - OERTen Participation in OERu concept

Q38. Which of the following best describes your Institution's current stage in the development of Open courses to be used for the OERu?

Complete and ready for piloting the OERu model

Undergoing development but nearing completion for piloting the OERu model

Early stages of development

Conceptualised but not yet undergoing development

Not yet conceptualised but participation discussed or agreed to

Not providing courses for the OERu at this stage

Other (Please specify): _____

Q39. Have the principles and policies of the OERu already been agreed to by your organisation's executive leadership and institutionalised within the organisation?

Yes, principles and policies have been agreed to by the organisations executive leadership

Yes, principles and policies have been agreed to but not yet institutionalised

No

I don't know

Other (Please specify): _____

Q40. Please use this textbox for adding any additional comments or information if required

OERu Evaluation - OERTen Participation in OERu concept

Q41. How many courses as a percentage of a degree are you planning to contribute to the OERu model, if any?

Q42. Are you currently experiencing any issues hindering participation in the OERu concept?

Yes

No

IF YES: Please describe the problems you are experiencing.

SKIP LOGIC: IF The answer to Question 6 is in list Non-teaching organisation then skip to Q47.

Financial support and sustainability

Q43. To what extent will your institution be required to change existing policies to successfully implement assessment services for courses based solely on OERs (including courses offered through the OERu)?

No policy revision required

1

2

3

4

5

Unsure / Don't Know

Extensive policy revision required

Please provide some insight into existing policies that hinder assessment services for courses based solely on OERs.

Please provide some insight into existing policies that support assessment services for courses based solely on OERs.

Q44. What processes will be put in place to mainstream assessment of OERu learning in the institution?

Financial support for course assessment

What resources (e.g. financial support, recruitment or buy-out time) has your institution committed to support the assessment of courses based solely on OERs?

Q45. Please provide an estimate of the cost of assessment services expressed as a percentage of full-tuition costs. Please answer as a percentage (don't use symbols).

Q46. What do you anticipate the conversion rate of learners participating in free OERu or OER based courses to be and requests for formal assessment services? Please answer as a percentage.

Success factors to participation in assessment of OER based courses

Q47. How effective do you think each of the following approaches will be for developing OERu Courses?

	1 - Not at all effective	2	3	4	5 - Very effective	Unsure / Don't Know
Developing or releasing the OERu course contribution under an open license (eg, single institution development model)						
A remix or assembly model building courses from existing OERs						
Collaborative development of OERu courses where institutions share the development responsibility						

Q48. What do you think are the key elements that an institution should have in place in order to participate successfully in the OERu concept or similar initiatives?

Obstacles to participation in assessment of OER based courses

Q49. To what extent do the following factors hinder successful implementation of the OERu model or similar initiatives within your institution?

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - To a large extent	Unsure / Don't Know
Negative perceptions towards OERs or open course delivery						
Lack of support at the senior leadership level						
Lack of alignment with organisational strategy or policy						
Concerns about existing technologies or infrastructure						
Lack of integration with current workflows or processes						
Lack of availability of committed staff members to support the project						
Lack of availability of volunteers						
Lack of availability of examiners or markers						
Lack of availability of training and support						
Cost of redeveloping courses						
Perceived lack of demand for open courses						
Lack of evidence for the enhancement of student learning						
Lack of a supportive community within the institution						

Q50. What are the main obstacles or challenges that you have encountered in attempting to implement OER initiatives at your institution?

Views on OERu within Higher Education context

Q51. What are your views on the OERu concept in the context of Higher Education in your country? Please provide your personal perspective here

Comments

Q52. Do you have any further comments?

Q53. Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Please check your email for the export of your responses to this survey to be used as a comparative tool against the benchmarks that have been generated once the compatibility indicators are completed.

For further information or if you have any questions e-mail: Gabi.Witthaus@le.ac.uk or angela.murphy@usq.edu.au