



Open Educational Resources Policy

Open teaching, learning and research materials

Technology
Arts Sciences
TH Köln

What are Open Educational Resources (OER)?

Definition

What Teaching staff **creates, uses, revises, shares,** and **saves** Open Educational Resources (OER) and follows Open Educational Practices (OEP) ...

How by studying the teaching, learning, and research materials of other instructors world-wide and using these in their teaching, and by releasing their own resources and making them available through open platforms ...

Why in order to innovatively further develop and diversify their own teaching practice in collaboration with others, to produce scientifically current teaching materials, and to give their students broad access to a subject or topic.

Preamble

Open Educational Resources (OER) are seen as having great potential for higher-education teaching, for instance by supporting methodological and didactic approaches, updating and further developing standardized educational content, and supporting individual teaching development and research processes. In the area of educational policy, too, OER offer good prospects because they have a positive effect on educational participation and the permeability of the educational system.

TH Köln's OER policy thus supports the OER recommendation that was approved at the 40th General Conference of UNESCO. The recommendation emphasizes its important contribution to providing inclusive, equal-opportunity, and high-quality education, and it calls upon member states to support OER. It recommends providing policy support for OER, improving access to OER, and developing measures to improve competences among the actors. In the recommendation on Open Science that was approved in 2021, UNESCO further underlines the need to use OER as an instrument to build open scientific capacity, to improve learning results, and to involve teaching staff and students in the collaborative process.

Definition

OER are open educational resources that are specifically designed to be open and are assigned certain usage rights ("licenses") so they can easily be further processed and published. According to the UNESCO definition, OER are "learning, teaching and research materials (...) that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others."¹

Strategic guidelines

TH Köln believes open educational resources are the basis for high-quality courses; through the *Digitalisierungsstrategie für Lehre und Studium 2025 [Digitization Strategy for Academic Affairs]* and the *Hochschulentwicklungsplan 2030 [University Development Plan]*, TH Köln has committed to supporting OER for the following reasons:

- OER promote good teaching as an "open design process that thrives on exchange and networking" (*Hochschulentwicklungsplan*, p. 12)²
- OER support "student learning processes" and help the "qualitative development of teaching" (*Digitalisierungsstrategie*, p. 9)³
- OER come from cooperation and the collaborative development of courses "in the virtual space" (*Digitalisierungsstrategie*, p. 10)
- OER facilitate "active participation in the scientific community of higher education research" (*Hochschulentwicklungsplan*, p. 12)

¹ [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources \(OER\) \(2019\)](#)

² [TH Köln \(2018\). Hochschulentwicklungsplan 2030](#)

³ [TH Köln \(2020\). Digitalisierungsstrategie für Lehre und Studium 2025](#)

Principles and measures

TH Köln has numerous support offerings for teaching staff who wishes to use, create, and/or publish OER, especially in the form of one-on-one OER consultations and networking events, which are offered by the Center for Academic Development ([ZLE](#)). Teaching staff is provided with digital and printed information materials about the use, creation, and publication of open teaching, learning, and research materials (e.g. checklists, collections of source material, [informational websites](#)). Other measures at TH Köln relating to OER are described below, throughout the OER cycle:

1) OER consulting and OER further education

The Center for Academic Development (ZLE), a central academic institution at TH Köln, offers teaching staff a comprehensive OER consulting portfolio in the form of regular further-education courses and opportunities for one-on-one support. In this way, TH Köln systematically supports its teaching staff' OER competences and provides consulting and further education resources on creating and producing OER, on technical formats and metadata, and on copyright issues. With the state portal for the Open Resources Campus NRW ([ORCA.nrw](#)) and especially the Legal Information office in the state portal, all teaching staff can also access general information, one-on-one consulting, and other service offerings.

2) OER promotion

TH Köln helps its teaching staff make their own teaching more visible within their scientific community and in funding programs (e.g. Digital University NRW ([DH.NRW](#))), build networks, and apply for appropriate funding. The explicit support for OER also makes it easier for teaching staff to succeed in funding programs that focus on academic affairs. One important criterion for awards, e.g., the teaching prize granted during the Day of Excellent Teaching, is the use and creation of teaching, learning, and research materials with an open license.

3) OER production

Teaching staff at TH Köln receives support from the ZLE Media Office for creating its own teaching, learning, and research materials. These services are available to any teaching staff who produces original media content for its teaching. Resources created through this process should be made available as OER, if possible, with a corresponding license.

4) OER licensing

As a basic principle, TH Köln recommends that open publications of scientific findings be "as open as possible, as closed as necessary."⁴ It is recommended that free access to didactic and non-commercial resources be provided through open licenses. When using, creating, and publishing OER, teaching staff at TH Köln is responsible for complying with the copyright and licensing requirements. In the case of direct open-access publications, TH Köln recommends publishing them under a Creative Commons license (preferably the applicable version of CC BY)⁵ or a corresponding OSI-compatible license.⁶ The licensing notice should include the following information:

⁴ [European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Open science and intellectual property rights: How can they better interact? \(2022\)](#)

⁵ These rights can only be granted by the person who holds the rights.

⁶ Open Source Initiative <https://opensource.org/>

Title of the work, name of the author, CC BY (current version with link)

Where TH Köln has usage rights for teaching, learning, and research materials from the respective authors according to the principles of § 43 UrhG [German Copyright Act – copyright within employment and service contracts], it hereby agrees – particularly in the spirit of the digitization agreement – that the authors shall provide these in the form of OER. This agreement applies exclusively to the necessary scope for this purpose.

5) Future OER use and metadata

Teaching staff at TH Köln is encouraged to add further information to its OER materials (in the form of metadata, e.g. the author) that will make it easier to find suitable materials. When assigning metadata, the requirements of the Open Resources Campus NRW ([ORCA.nrw](https://www.orca.nrw.de/)) must be followed. TH Köln recommends publishing OER in open and editable file formats whenever possible in order to facilitate future use and further processing. TH Köln also recommends that any software developed at the university be published as Free/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS). Where software is used in research, the university recommends considering the use of free software.

6) OER provision and OER archiving

As a network point in the Open Resources Campus NRW ([ORCA.nrw](https://www.orca.nrw.de/)) consortium, TH Köln is actively participating in building a state portal. The state portal provides an open infrastructure and central meeting place for teaching staff at TH Köln, where it can publish and archive open teaching, learning, and research materials through the platform and makes them permanently available.

7) OER quality assurance

OER practice at TH Köln is embedded in a strategic framework; it helps raise the profile and assure the quality of teaching, and it contributes to open research and teaching in NRW, Germany, and worldwide. In this sense, TH Köln sees itself as part of an open educational ecosystem. The OER topic is strategically anchored with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Center for Academic Development (ZLE).

Legal Notice

TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences

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Open Educational Resources Policy of TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences

https://th-koeln.de/mam/downloads/deutsch/hochschule/open_educational_resources_policy.pdf

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